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October 1982

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Keith Wagstaff

Cinematographer The Man from Snowy Mountains



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The Questioner

Industry Hysteria

South Money moves

As it is to prove the money count Australia from having a twin computer money count again at the heart of 21st the film industry has plunged into a head of meetings. Financing is a no-spenders process and the owner to discuss issues collectively may raise the bid equity a stone low certain aspects of the industry are using the panic situation to attempt to control the activities of others.

Australia has no monetary system (median) especially in film and the obsessive price bidding at present is the catalyst to drive it to a symptom.

At the end of the last financial year, the industry was in a state of panic. At the time the industry was in a state of panic, the industry was in a state of panic. At the time the industry was in a state of panic, the industry was in a state of panic.

The most visible experiments for the industry are:

1. The industry with the tendency and previous of the last year is to make a film investment.
2. The existing economic condition.
3. The poor quality of the film made in 1981/82.

Not surprisingly, producers have blamed the last two problems and are actively seeking to have the last and the last of the industry to be controlled beyond their control. But the 1982 season should be underlined.

2. Quality

Of the 20 films entered in the 1982 Australian Film Awards, most were low budget and it is difficult to judge, but one point is the quality of the film. The industry played the last film with a number from 1 to 10.

My ratings - which should be low - are based on the last year's film and the last year's film.

Rating	No. of films
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	1
8	1
9	1
10	1

The average is 2.5. Inevitably a few fine industry would expect with price in but, I believe only eight films could be considered to have succeeded in any significant way.

Of the 100 films entered in the 1982 Australian Film Awards, most were low budget and it is difficult to judge, but one point is the quality of the film. The industry played the last film with a number from 1 to 10.

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and government bodies must shoulder some responsibility. No one also agrees to work on a film is any capacity can dominate financial results from the industry product. I people bought one of the film product and were able to do the work of what they are doing the standard might be higher.

3. Fair

The two principal problems on the present are:

- (a) the financing, production and release of a film must be addressed in the one financial year is necessary for the industry to be able to do the work of what they are doing the standard might be higher.
- (b) Australian money has moved into overseas film (e.g. *Amigo*, *Superman*), but still oriented towards Australia.

4. Production

The 12 month financial year means the industry is in a state of panic.

1. A 12-month period: these quality production which has more than 12 months to complete is a symptom.
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Don-offer

It is interesting to see the MPAA at a media and the Australian Film Awards, but one point is the quality of the film. The industry played the last film with a number from 1 to 10.

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Generally the industry has proposed that the industry be extended to other films financed under 100% to be completed within 24 months of the end of the financial year in which the investment.

On Overseas lending

The opening of Australian dollars into foreign particularly U.S. film has really been the most obvious factor. At the beginning of 1982, for example, John Huston Window at United Artists was the first to be extended to the U.S. film industry.

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HENRI SAFRAN

talks about *Norman Loves Rose*

Henri Safran, French-born director of *Storm Boy*, *Listen to the Lion* and the television series *Golden Soak*, discusses his latest film with Margaret Smith.

What motivated you to write the story of a 13-year-old boy's infatuation with an older woman? Did you want to reverse the Lolita complex?

No, I thought it was a situation which would lend itself to comedy. I was renaissance — and I should point out I don't have a brother — about my emotions when I was 13. I wanted to capture them, before I forgot them completely. I feel I was able to translate these emotions pretty faithfully.

You both directed and wrote "*Norman Loves Rose*". Is that the way you prefer to work?

I wrote it out of sheer frustration. I wanted to direct a comedy and had looked for a suitable script for years, but to no avail. I then decided to stop moaning and do something myself.

Yes, I find it satisfying to direct my own script. I couldn't quarrel with the writer!

Can there be a problem doing both? Our suspicion you would need a strong producer to give an outside voice.

Well, as I was also the producer, I didn't have any problems. But if one is level-headed and uses common sense, one can see the error. A filmmaker doesn't work in a vacuum. You are working with actors, technicians, and studios, and everybody has something to



contribute. If something is not working in a film or a script, people will let you know. Then you can discuss and rectify the problem.

No, it is basically a matter of common sense and a certain measure of taste, as well as not believing too much in your own talent as a writer, perhaps.

Did it surprise you that there weren't good comedy scripts available in Australia?

No, in fact scripts are very difficult to find, no matter where in the world you are. It is just that I couldn't find the type of comedy I liked. I didn't want to do a broad, slapstick comedy. It's not my style. I wanted to do a gentle comedy.

You waited quite a while after "*Storm Boy*" and "*Listen to the Lion*" before doing "*Norman Loves Rose*". During that time you started work on several projects. Are you still going to pursue them?

A lot of those films died a natural death from lack of money or lack of dollars. They may be revived, I don't know. I don't have a great enthusiasm for things of the past. I'd rather look forward to new projects.

Let's *Storm Boy* at *Rose* the love of 12 year old Norman. *Norman Loves Rose*

Your films have won quite a few awards, including one at Moscow for "Starc Boy". Why do you think they liked it so much? Was it the semi-cynicalist and anti-materialist message?

Yes, and there was that relationship between a white and black, a child and an adult, which probably would have pleased the Third World.

I was both surprised and not surprised it won. It only came back to me after seeing that prize that when I first started work on *Starc Boy* I had an idea some beautiful Russian film shot in the depths of Siberia. I thought that if I could get the same feeling in *Starc Boy* it would help the story. I had completely forgotten about this over the filming period, being more concerned with the location I had, and so on. I don't think I even discussed it with Geoff Burton [director of photography].

But the memory came back after Moscow. So, perhaps by chance or some other reason, that film struck a chord with the Russians.

Your films have an international flavor as well as being specifically Australian. Do you think that is because you lived in France and Britain, as well as Australia?

If you have had your formative years in a great country, it's going to affect you for the rest of your life, no matter how long you live elsewhere.

How many years did you spend in France?

I left for the first time at the age of 23 — almost into puberty.

And in France you first worked as television...

Yes. Then I went to work in Britain before coming to Australia. I then went back to France.



Alvin Grey (from *Red Goldfish*) is seen in *Starc Boy* (a award winning film feature, *Starc Boy* - below left). I met in the film a 25-minute film completed by Burton just after *Starc Boy* (below right). David Cameron and Bill Hunter in *Starc Boy* (a BBC television series). *Golden Soul*.

back to Australia, then to France and to Britain for nine years. After that, I decided to come back to Australia.

In Britain you worked on the "Love Story" series...

Ah, that was a delightful experience. I produced and directed most

of the 25 love stories. It was a very happy time.

Was each episode a separate play?

Yes, which meant I had to commission 25 different writers, some of whom were very good.

In Britain, the better writers do

write for television because there's virtually no film industry...

That's right. Television attracts some extremely good writers. It is quite well paid, too.

Why did you come back to Australia?

I wanted to break from television. Having been in it for most of my working life, I felt that I had done everything I had wanted to do. I was starving. Also, the life in London had become rather squishy and social. It wasn't anymore the London of the 1960s, when it was jumping and creative, and the sidewalks were flowing everywhere. It had become a bit level and clean.

So, I decided I didn't want to live there anymore. It was a personal thing, and had nothing to do with work. It was then a chance of going back to Paris or coming to Australia, where I'd worked before and where I was known. Having married an Australian girl, I opted for Australia.

It is interesting that a lot of your work has been concerned with the outcasts. Could this be because you have moved from culture to culture?

You have noticed that?

Yes. There is the conflict in "Lovers in the Lion", and "Starc Boy" is really about those outcasts, the Aboriginals, again the outcasts denied but down-and-out men; and his child. And, of course, there is the adolescent in "Northern Love Rose"...

I hadn't thought of it, but, yes. It is probably true that I do have that affinity for the outsider. It probably comes from my not quite belonging.

It also gives your films, particu-



help "Enter in the Lion", a different perspective. Also, not only do you film primarily from an audience's viewpoint, you often shift the focus . . .

Yes . . . Well, you really have watched my films.

I work that way because that is how I see life. It is like a conversation: the focus shifts from one object or subject to another.

In "Norman Loves Rose" there is an increased freedom in the way you use the camera. One thinks of that early scene where you freeze on Rose and Michael coming to the door, and then send them into reverse motion. Did you feel free to use such effects because "Norman Loves Rose" is a comedy?

Yes. That is the first time I have used that device. Actually, I had to cut a big chunk out because the film was running close to two hours, which is far too long for a comedy of that kind. I had to re-adapt certain things, but I kept that freeze frame because it was a convenient way of getting me back on time. And being a comedy, one can use the freedom of devices like the freeze frame, which is used and completely successful.

You seem to be making up your own film, especially having "Days of Our Lives" in the background . . .

That was one way of saying to myself, and also to the audience, don't take it too seriously. It just wrote itself that way, and probably is how I felt at five o'clock in the morning.

Do you make many impromptu decisions like that, especially on the set?

Yes. I improve on the set by giving the actors quite a lot of free-



Below: David Byrne as Michael, Rose's uncle and eventual husband. Below left: Norman, a member of the Grand Jury, in the prison. Rose is on the left. Right: David Byrne as Norman, Michael's uncle. Michael dreams of Aunt Fannie while dining with Rose, Norman, and Rose.

dom. Having said that, I trust them. We experiment, which is not all that anti-consumer. It also gives a chance to the lighting cameramen to offer suggestions.

I never try to restrict actors in their physical behavior because of the constraints of a set, for instance. If a set-up doesn't work, I move the camera. I believe in the freedom of the actor.

My attitudes have changed over the years. I started off as a dogmatic young director and, as I have

grown older, I have become more liberal. I probably have a greater amount of respect for them than I used to have.

Do you try to shoot in sequence?

I try to shoot to the budget, which in most cases precludes shooting in sequence.

Do you do any workshopping beforehand?

It depends on the part. I will if I think it is going to be of value, but otherwise no. I will wait till we get on the set to look it around.

You once studied acting. Has that helped you with your work as a director and writer?

As a writer, yes, as a director, I don't know.

In "Norman Loves Rose", you have directed some unusual performances. For instance, David Downer (Michael), whose car has been in other films such as "The Killing of Angel Street", here seems to be working to his full potential . . .

David got very few directions. We had little talks before we started a scene, or at the beginning of the day, and then I'd leave him alone. He's a very gifted actor. He just happened to be in tune with the character he was playing, and understood what I wanted.

It was the same with the rest of the cast. Really.

Had Myra de Groot done much work before?

Oh yes. Myra starred as a child actress in London at the age of 14.

What is your feeling about working with Australian actors? Do you think they are taking the art of acting much more seriously?

I have always found Australian actors very serious, perhaps a little too so about acting with a bit "A." You can be serious without being pompous or scornful. This is going to sound like a cliché, but acting should be a natural function.

An extension of self . . .

Yes.



An overseas visitor who was teaching acting here recently said that most Australian actors still don't want to come to terms with that self. It was a fear, I suppose . . .

I don't know if it is fear and I don't know about the psychology behind the miseries. But there is, for some people, an inability to merge completely with a fictitious character.

In "Norman Loves Rose" there is a mix of the mad and crazy with pathos and tragedy. It is the double-edge of life, which is also reflected in your characters. On the one hand, Martin (Warren Mitchell) is trying to be an honorable man by not having his fling with his secretary, but he still faces the potential of that freedom. And then there is Michael who refuses to make choices, and all the time is caught up in other people's expectations. But there is the glimmer in him every time he looks at Charles (Barry Doo) and senses what that freedom could be . . .

Well, everybody wants to be somebody else, but they can't be. They can't even be themselves. This is how I find people — and myself. It is an observation I've used in the writing of the characters.

But you also like making them just that little bit more extreme and ridiculous . . .

In the framework of a comedy, you need to exaggerate your characters, without falling into slapstick.

There is a similar feeling in the way you deal with love. Everyone feels it deeply, but at the same time it is fickle. You have these two qualities of love going simultaneously . . .

That is the way I feel about it.



Below: Rose, Michael and Norman. Above: Norman with Rose (Barry Doo) — credited as a young man in mask. Norman Loves Rose

Actually, I am in the process of writing another screenplay dealing specifically with these things.

As a drama or a comedy?

A comedy. It has to be funny. All people, beautiful adolescents of love lend themselves to comedy. They are tragic to the people concerned at the time, but with the distance of time they become ridiculous. I'm sure everyone has a tragic love story.

This is the Woody Allen quality in you . . .

I am a great admirer of Woody Allen, and at one stage I consid-

ered dedicating the film to him. But I thought it was perhaps a little presumptuous.

Actually, the orthodox Jew who appears throughout the film was, in the original version, a much more important character. He was, in a sense, my tribute to Woody Allen.

Another theme in all your films is the way other text people and how people try to escape the stereotypes . . .

It's part of the same attraction. Everybody wants to be somebody they're not, and lead a different life. "I wish I . . ." "I wish I . . ." "I wish I . . ." this is what you hear as you walk around. There is always a lot of regret in people's lives.

Your films are very strong visually, and often the dialogue is almost secondary to the visuals. Is that a quality coming from your Australian background?

I don't think I can comment on that. But I don't like much dialogue. Film is about images, and I can't write dialogue as I can.

It has something to do with the seductivity of the visual message. One gets glimpses of it in your films, but that seductivity isn't sustained . . .

I see what you mean, but I don't really care whether people get the message or not. If they happen to reach my intention, fine, if they don't, it doesn't distract from the story. They just move on to an additional thrill.

How do you feel about the direction the Australian film industry has taken since the changes in the tax legislation?

Well, there has been a flurry of films, and every script that was written in the past few years has found finance. So there was bound to be some bad films. But the proposition, if you compare it with any other country, is no worse. And there are some very good films. *Moving Out* is probably my favorite.

I suspect now that the system has changed most of the backing of mediocre scripts, and hopefully the next batch will be better, and the one after that better still.

Do you sometimes feel that the amount of dedication required to produce something good is more than it's worth? Perhaps this is where people are coming out, by feeling films are far richer below they're ready . . .

Well, the system that exists now encourages a sloppy attitude because a film has to be shot within a few months and released before June 30. Hopefully this situation will change. We filmmakers are doing our best to lead the government to make this ridiculous time limit on making a film.

Do you draw on European film culture to give substance to your work?

Absolutely. This is why *Channel 0/20* is a blessing. I have found that life is that much better since its advent.

Do you find the film culture in Australia outstanding and supporting, or does it still show its youthfulness?

In youth. What I miss in Australia films, and I shouldn't sound critical because my films are not intellectual, is any intellectual stimulation. There is so little probing of the mind, of the soul and existence. I miss the literary quality of films that come out of Europe. I hope that one day we will get that in Australia.

Will your next film get closer to what you want to experience?

Yes. I don't want to frighten anyone away, but my next film will probably be a little bit more intellectual than the previous one.

So far, your films have worked at the box office. You do seem able to blend the commercial elements with your other aims . . .

This is probably because I am an ordinary person, and my dreams, wishes and dreams are very much everybody else's. You can only be true to yourself. *



PICTURE PREVIEW

MOVING OUT







Moving Out Two turbulent, adolescent weeks in the life of a migrant Italian boy living in Melbourne's inner suburbs. His family is preparing to move out of their house for a new one in the more affluent outer suburbs, while a recently-arrived family from Italy prepares to move in.

Moving Out is directed by Michael Pattinson from a screenplay by Jan Sark. For producers Jane Bellantyne and Michael Pattinson. The film stars Vince Colosimo as Gino, with Kate Jassin, Peter Jark, Spike Ford, Luciano Catenezzo, Brian Jones and Ivor Raine.

Opening scene Killing time in the inner suburbs: Helen (Sherry Smith) and David

Opposite page, top: Kate Jassin Colosimo, Allen (Ivor Raine) and Brian (Luciano Catenezzo). Bottom left: Gino at an Italian party in the outer suburb; it about to be entered by the young couple (Sherry Smith and Peter Jark). Bottom right: Helen visits in a gallery for her friend.

Top right: Gino, Sandy (Judy Cooper), Helen, Brian and Allen track down in an abandoned car. Center right: Gino and his family (Ivor Raine, Kate Jassin and Sherry Smith) meet the arrival of an Italian family in Melbourne suburb. Right: Gino with his mother, Mrs. Scythian (Sandy Gert).





THE PRICE OF SUCCESS

The Films of Michael Ritchie

Neil Sinyard

One of the most curious American films of recent years has been Michael Ritchie's *The Island* (1980). It is curious because there are few films which have earned more controversy tailored to a modern audience's relish for gore and violence, and yet the film was a resounding commercial flop. It is even more curious because of the decision to hire Michael Ritchie as the director. In the 1970s, this would have been like asking Preston Sturges to direct *Cat People*.

Michael Ritchie's situation as the modern Hollywood is rather intriguing, particularly because, at the time of writing, it seems quite unpredictable. In the mid-1970s, especially after the achievement of *Sizzle* (1975) and the popularity of *The Bad News Bears* (1976), Ritchie looked set to become one of the leading figures of Hollywood in the next decade. In 1982, after the release without trace of *An Almost Perfect Affair* (1978), the critical and commercial drubbing of *The Island* (1980) and the ultimate total consumption of Ritchie's individuality in the mouth of Bette Midler in *Divine Madness* (1980), it is extremely difficult to envisage his future prospects. Now seems a good time to take stock of Ritchie's achievements and prospects, to offer some observations on his place in the new Hollywood, and on some stylistic and thematic characteristics of his films, and to suggest that *The Island* might be less of an aberration than it first appears.

In the 1970s, Michael Ritchie tended to be regarded as a sort of burlesque-bourgeois Robert Altman. His films have the same improvisatory feel to them, and a similar sense of an idiosyncratic director searching for the freedom and impermanence of the independent filmmaker within the constraints of the commercial system. His films are all set in modern times (yes, for the most part, they are somewhat outside the mainstream of modern American

cinema. They are not black-bustled or especially sexy or violent. Even the violent subject matter of *Private Cat* (1972) and *The Island* is turned inside-out by Ritchie whose burlesquing of the material supplies a comment on the grosser tendencies of modern Hollywood. "It's my country," says Steve Mackinnon's villain about the U.S. in *Private Cat*. "I give it just what it wants. Deceit and flesh." The comment is relevant to certain aspects of Hollywood, too. Like all filmmakers, Ritchie's dilemma has possibly in recognizing what Hollywood wants with what he wishes to give them. Unlike some, however, this dilemma seems to have become increasingly difficult for him.

There are other ways in which he seems a somewhat eccentric figure in the new Hollywood. Unlike directors such as Francis Coppola, Michael Cimino or Alan J. Pakula, his films do not reflect the signals of American political unease and paranoia in the early 1970s. Indeed, Ritchie's *The Candidate* (1972) arrives a remarkably bright tone considering the underlying cynicism of the context, and Ritchie has suggested that, if he had made *All the President's Men*, the film would have had less heroic posturing, more human fallibility, bumbling and fear. Unlike the work of Brian de Palma, Peter Bogdanovich, Paul Schrader and John Carpenter, his films are not packed with references to his favorite old movies, or with stylistic devices like slow motion and freeze-frames. He is not a "movie buff" — that dreadful phrase for those luminaries of the modern scene like Martin Scorsese, John Milius, George Lucas and Steven Spielberg who have generously come up through film school and whose films are marked by a modernist sensibility crossed with a genuine nostalgia and admiration for the Hollywood past. He is not a protégé of Roger Corman: in other words, he has very little in common with the new talents who represented the filmmaking scene in the U.S. during the past decade.

The point to emphasize is that this difference is itself significant. If Ritchie seems something of an outsider, a man who, although successful enough in his own way, does not quite seem to belong to the prevailing system, this is valued by the kind of heroes who populate his films



Above: Puckett and Marvin Tate (Don Dineen/Dunne) in *Sea-Tough*. Below: "Mary Jane" (Gene Hackman) (second left), and Paul Dooley (Lee Harvey) right in *Prime Cat*. Ritchie's political Bill Murray (Robert Redford) in the campaign race in *The Candidate*



of their own personalities and ambitions. "Look at yourself, look at this team," coach Merrin Dungey (Walter Matthau) is told early on; the scene is both a reflection of him and a reflection on him. Ritchie coaches physically attack children at different stages of the film, the kids suddenly becoming the scapegoats of the adult's frustration and directorial frustration's decision to let *The Bad News Bears* lose is in a way his attempt to let them stay in the realm of childhood for a little longer, to postpone the overt ruthlessness necessary for them to succeed in an inquisitive adult world. If Ritchie is the greatest director of children, here. Anyway, Mackendrick, the reason is that he makes films about children rather than for them, and that he has a complex and unemotional attitude towards innocence.

Ritchie's fascination with children and the "starkness" could might immediately evoke Mark Twain (and certainly Ritchie's themes, possibly because of his extensive background in literature and history, relate directly to various aspects of American culture rather than simply to American cinema). In another respect, he is closer to Herman Melville, which accurately gives a different perspective to the same mythology of *The Island* like Melville's work. Ritchie's film has a recorded but pervasive structural pattern of the Double, whereby the hero can freeze a dark antagonist who makes him aware of things worse than himself that he has not previously acknowledged.

However one characterizes this "double" figure (the hero's conscience, or his subconscious, or his negative double), the effort is to threaten the security of the hero's world. One can see this in the rivalry between Clint Eastwood and Cheppetto in *Duelling Racer*, Nick Dooley (Lee Harvey) and "Mary Jane" (Gene Hackman) in *Prime Cat*, Battenbaker and Roy Turner (Vic Morrow) in *The Bad News Bears*, Bob Freeland (Bruce Bial) and Andy DeCarlo (Nicholas Pryor) in *Sauke*, Bill Puckett (Burt Reynolds) and Marvin Tate (Don Dineen/Kris-alfsson) in *Sea-Tough*, and Maynard

(Michael Caine) and Max (David Warner) in *The Island*. In each case the first character is shaken out of his dominant or quiescent state of mind by the actions of the second, which could, if allowed to proceed unchecked, pull down the facade of stability which the former has constructed.

Revealing this pervasive pattern in Ritchie not only gives one a different perspective on the films, but provides a subtle shift of emphasis and implication. The double in *The Candidate* is not Bill Mackey's (Robert Redford) political opponent but Mackey himself, the private man looking outward at the public arena he is creating and unconsciously unable to contain laughter at the split between what he believes and what he is called upon to say. In *Sea-Tough*, Bill Puckett's infatuation with love for Barbara Jane Beckman (Jill Clayburgh) surfaces at the moment when Marvin Tate becomes engaged to her. DeCarlo, the cynical alcoholic, represents the lurking danger beneath Bob Freeland's superficial good cheer in *Sauke*, the confrontation between them in prison, where DeCarlo mocks Freeland's values, visibly demonstrates the hero for the rest of the film, providing a glimpse of chaos which must be resisted at all costs. Turner's coach on his son in *The Bad News Bears* is the moment when Battenbaker recognizes the brutality to which his own behavior might lead if he permits his obsession with winning.

The perception of this crucial Ritchie theme draws the greatest illumination on *Duelling Racer* and *The Island*. One of the implications in the case of *Duelling Racer* is that the coach and not the champion is, or should be, the central character. Interestingly, in James Selzer's original screenplay, when Roman Polanski was not to direct, it was the coach and it only changed when Redford came into the project. "The essence," said Selzer of his original script, "was that a coach who had struggled for years to try and have a champion found himself close to his finishing goal but having to work with an opponent he despised, that's Redford. Part of the weakness of the film — and the reason why the last third is much the strongest part — is a structural indecision about the weighting of coach and champion in the narrative and on related recognition that the centre of the film is really the coach. In the case of *The Island*, the recognition of the centrality of the Double theme in Ritchie is actually quite astonishing: the film becomes not peripheral to the director's main concerns but the most explicit manifestation of them.

If the implications of Ritchie's themes need some teasing out, so too do the significant aspects of his visual palette. Ritchie's style seems to derive its notes characteristically from two sources: the comedy of small-town American life, and earnest world democracy. In the case of the former, Ritchie's manner is probably closer to Kurosawa, Billy Wilder and, above all, Preston Sturges. His most Sturges-like film is *Sauke*, which observes the democracy's troubles and tensions and the little man's odd dreams and disappointments with dramatic sympathy and affection.

There is a darker side to the film, though, particularly in the extraordinary scope it permits of American sexuality. The film is rampant with retarded adults, fragile females, and soybeanish children, reaching to apex of suggestive confusion when one of the contestants for the title of Young American Man does a variation on the theme of "inner beauty" while performing a striptease to an orchestra

accomplishment of Beethoven's Ninth. Because of the cold, detached view of sex in which sexuality is so depicted but not to be touched, the film builds up quite a powerful atmosphere of further grace and freedom. Indeed its comic tone lacks a powerful study of marriage, maturity and maturation in Tennessee Williams, and the film is reminiscent not only of *Strangers but the great 1950s melodramas of Douglas Sirk.*

The documentary element in Kishchik derives from his early acquaintance with celebrated cinema writer journalists such as the *Movie* Brothers. It explores the power of the spirit footage in *Donald* Kiser, the serious authenticity of *The Candidate*, the apparent spontaneity of *Smile*. Kishchik has said that it is useful for him in every film to start from the "reality" of a situation before affecting it artistically or ironically, and one can see this pervading even in an overt fantasy like *The Island*. Less positively, the documentary impulse might explain his apparent spontaneity and ease with narrative. His films tend to rely less on plot than on sharp observation of behavior that culminates in a single point of crisis or climax.

In fact, the tension between documentary and narrative in his films has always provided structural problems, perhaps only satisfied totally in *Smile*. (It is hard not to think that one of the attractions for Kishchik of *Divine Madness*, which is simply the visual record of a performance, was the opportunity it gave for postponing the necessity for coming to terms with the problem.) This tension in his style throws the structure of *Donald* Kiser and its close relation to the character of *The Candidate*. Whenever it is necessary to convey the physical fact of political campaigning as a sort of absurdity (as in *The Candidate*), the film becomes vague and evasive to the point where certain important narrative events like Kiser's endorsement of the candidate of his own, the candidate's acceptance of a public relations man whom he detests are completely inapplicable. The television debate between the candidate and his political opponent is not as behaviorally detailed but so complimentary on the level of domestic characterization, no reason is given for the supposedly experienced politician suddenly behaving like Captain Quark. The present whereby the candidate's face is subjected to the public is brilliantly observed, but the film's rudimentary attempt to get behind the man's face to his character (the hints about his middle-class background, his actual infidelity) had absolutely nowhere.

Kishchik has said that he would have liked to develop the candidate's relationship with his wife more fully. As it is, the wife is simply left in the background of the film as a not appendage of her husband, and all the scenes of the marriage are inconsequential and flat. This exposes a general limitation of Kishchik's work, which is simply that he has been unable so far to create any really revealing human color in his films. This might reflect his feelings about a male-dominated America, but the reverberative evidence seems to confirm Kishchik of a lurking misogyny. Again one cannot help feeling that *Divine Madness* is a means of disguising this problem as well: it allows a risqué female to let fly at her audience (she addresses them as "ladies and gents" at one stage) but it simply elevates the performance and to her no attitude towards it, provides an dramatic context for it, and, if anything, it is an evaded away on the theme of the female as grotesque.

This in turn makes one wonder about the precise nature of comedy in Kishchik's films. Is it

basically a mode of criticism or is it in aspect of evanescence? In a marvelous film like *Smile*, with its first critique of aspects of small-town morality, it results a remark of Alexander Kluge about his professor for a certain kind of comedy that "let you do things that are too dangerous, or that a critical audience can't accept." In the case of a film like *The Candidate*, the humor is mostly of the order of a superficial sarcasm, reflecting a refusal to acknowledge or engage with the darker implications of its material, preferring to sit back in critical complacency. In the context of this, the unadmitted role of a film like *The Island*, generally derided by the press, might well seem not only preferable but liberating.

One further dimension of Kishchik's methods should be discussed, and that is his relationship with his writers and his use of stars. Rather like Richard Lester, Kishchik has never taken a writing credit on his films, yet undoubtedly is a powerful shaping influence on the final form of the script. Considerable changes were made to the original screenplay of *Donald* Kiser (previously recommended Robert Redford) and *The Bad News Bears* (to place much greater emphasis on the children and to concentrate the world of the film on that baseball field). Certainly Kishchik's way with a Robert Dillon screenplay for *Prime Cut* has many more elements of parody and play than John Farrow's screenplay employed with the same writer's material for *99 and 44-1/2 Percent Dead and French Connection 2*. The elements of humor comedy Kishchik extracts from the Peter Benchley screenplay for *The Island* are quite distinct from the other renderings of other Benchley scripts for *Jaws* and *The Deep*. Kishchik has never used the same writer twice yet the films are identifiably his, which suggests the presence of Kishchik's personality and his desire to be recognized as an actor.

A characteristic feature of his work is his use of actors. It is not just that some stars (Robert Redford, Sam Raynolds, Walter Matthau, Bruce Dern) have rarely looked better than in their films for him. It is that there is no clear delineation in the films between the characters



Above: the *Young America* contest in *Smile*. Below: Bruce Dern in *Donald* Kiser's "visual record of performance." (Diane Madigan)





Top: Stevenson holds one of his players while Ronald Wharton (from *O'Neil*) looks on. The *Bad News Bears* Above: Michael Caine and Jeff Bridges (left) in *Smile* and John Wood (right) in *The Island*. Below: Peter Onorati (left) in *Smile* and John Wood (right) in *The Island*.



they play and they are persons, which partly accounts for their ease in Ritchie's film but also relates to the director's interest in play, performance and people on display. So Ritchie's persona as the cool professional has never been better deployed than in *Dances with Wolves* and *The Candidate*, and the same can be said for Ritchie's ruffled and lovable tones in *The Bad News Bears* and *Run Run Run*! quarterback Gary Cane in *Smile*. Though Bruce Dern's persona as the bundle of nerves barely a coating of normality is rendered so wittily in *Smile* that, when he takes his son to see a psychiatrist, the doctor starts cross-examining him. The logical consequence of this trait in Ritchie is for a star to wind up playing him or herself, and this happens with Michael Wood's cameo as himself in *The Candidate* and Peter Onorati's performance in *Devote* Madison.

Clearly it would take quite a week to encompass all of the many facets of Ritchie. It would have been interesting to see what he would have made of Paddy Chayefsky's *The Hospital* before it was taken out of his hands and put into the dull palms of Arthur Hiller. Given his wit, his sense of the American dream, his misology, his skepticism about social institutions, his fascination with television, sport, child-like behaviour, therapy, romance and crime, he seems a man born to direct *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. So it is all the more surprising that the producers chose to have it reviewed sentimentally, unimpassively and tendentiously by Mike Forman. But for an up-to-date and inclusive example of the theme, style and preoccupations of Michael Ritchie, *The Island* will do quite nicely.

The critical response to *The Island* seemed unanimous in asserting that Peter Breckley's pulp sensibility had completely subverted Ritchie's personality. But even in an early scene when Maynard and his son Jamie (Jeffrey Frank) visit a gas shop just the father's shopping as a target anticipates the shot he will fire into the grease at the grill, some Rorschach drawings occur. "He's a compromiser!" says the voiceless of Japan, and the tone of the scene has the kind of irony that we instantly associate more with Ritchie than with Breckley, surely in Maynard's mockery of the

man's idealism. When father and son are kidnapped by Nazi hussars, most Ritchie themes come into play, particularly his pre-occupation with the father-son relationship and the theme of the Double (Nao tries to replace Maynard as the boy's father). The attitude to women is again misogynistic. The employment of the real persona of Michael Caine and of Daniel Warren is self-conscious to the point of parody, and similarly to *Smile* in the little Russia where Maynard loses control as he loses his glasses but recovers his heroic potency when he regains them. The element of parody, strongly tinged by wishfulness, takes *The Island* in time to *Prime Cut*, the last work seriously crossing the horror line with Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure in much the same way as *Prime Cut* marks the horror film with 1950s paganism.

The central theme of *The Island* is loss of innocence and this is rendered in the most concrete cinematic terms imaginable: that is, the death of Danny. "For Mickey Mouse, not Donald Duck..." promises the radio announcer prior to the play's first attack on the host. The ordeal of father and son is precipitated by their abortive attempt to journey to Disneyland. (It is worth remembering that Bruce Dern's dreamy suspicion in *Smile* suggests as the end that he and his wife should have a holiday break in Disneyland.) It is as if, by the time of *The Island*, Ritchie believes this world of innocence no longer exists. The penan may be, as Maynard puts it, "a bunch of scoundrels playing Long John Silvery Silver", but the violence of the language suggests the corruption of innocent fantasy, and these comic villains are also left unnamed.

When the parents end out on a rampage, the music swells to the soundtrack. It is Richard Strauss's symphonic poem *Ein Heldenleben*. This is more than a straightforward recap. It recalls Ritchie's use of Beethoven's *Cosmos* as a serendipitous accompaniment to the action of *The Bad News Bears*, and it might even be another Dostoevskian reference, paying as several passages in *Fathers* by offering a "vocalisation" of a type of classical music. In fact, *Heldenleben* informs the whole structure of *The Island*, which might be the reason that the film holds together better than some other of Ritchie's films. Both symphonic poem and film have a music opening exposition, take the crisis for a ride, introduce the female theme, then the battle, offer wistful recollections of distress from earlier works, and conclude with a poignant and poignant epilogue — in Ritchie's case, a notably eerie and visually off-kilter recollections between father and son. Strauss's renewed fascination with Nietzsche and Dostoev is also an appropriate association for *The Island*.

In total, it is one of the most brilliant and evocative uses of classical music in the history of the cinema. Luciano Visconti's use of Mahler in *Death in Venice* is positively pedestrian in comparison. It is also a nice present joke. In order to emphasize *The Island* as indeed a Michael Ritchie film, why not refer potently to *Heldenleben* which is, after all, the most singular example of estheticism in symphonic music?

The most important thing about the music, though, is that its use in the film is mock heroic. It explains the absence of heroes and heroism, and the underbelly we must feel when Maynard turns the gas on the parent —

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PAULINE Kael and the AUSTRALIAN CINEMA

In one of your reviews you describe "My Brilliant Career" as being "emotionally lacerated". What do you mean by that?

It is a Victorian or post-Victorian novel told in its own terms. It is very much a feminist princess fantasy because the girl has nothing to recommend her but her charms and wit, yet everybody wants her. Frances Chamberlain wants her to be his wife but the story says she's going off to have her career. I didn't know women novelist had more experience by not marrying. I rather thought they would have a good deal more.

We have no sense of what her life is going to be. It is a 16-year-old girl's vision of the life of an important artist. That is partly why it was so successful here. It would be very difficult for Americans to take simple-minded American films, but when you get a beautifully-crafted Australian one, which is essentially an old-fashioned romance, it is easy for people to tell themselves into thinking they're getting something new.

By "lacerated", I mean the same kind of unadorned thing that you get in *Masterpiece Theatre*, which has a great following with the same people who go to see houses to see Australian films.

What's wrong with well-crafted films?

There's an emotional excitement in them. The great thing about

Pauline Kael is one of America's best-known and controversial film critics. Her reviews in *The New Yorker* and her many books take delight in upturning conventional wisdoms, particularly about Hollywood and its "mediocre" films. Preferring films which emotionally confront and disturb an audience, Kael has promoted directors of independent spirit and obsession. It is not surprising her favorite Australian director is Fred Schepisi.

In the following interview, conducted by Sue Mathews as research for "American Movies, Australian Dreams", a radio series produced by Mathews and Peter Hamilton, Kael discusses recent Australian films and, not surprisingly, offers some startling opinions.

film is that they can break through academic barriers and take us to places that books can't. They are really simple and involve us. Australian films are like reading an old-fashioned novel.

I think there is an audience which is frustrated of American films, because the movies often are new, they are not yet digested. It is also true that the most beloved films in this country are those in which the movies are pre-digested, such as *On Golden Pond* and *Ordinary People*. There's no sense of discovery. It's all laid out.

When Australians take a road, and just carefully and faithfully

follow it, they are giving you a pre-digested experience. They make no discoveries. Well, that's not what real filmmaking is about. It is about finding meanings as you go along and being open to the possibilities that the actors bring. It is about keeping the process alive. That is why I like Robert Altman's films so much. You have a sense of self-discovery in the film itself. I think you get this sense with only one Australian director, Fred Schepisi.

And yet his films also have a straightforward, narrative structure. . .

Sure. But his films are full of personal obsession. You can feel it in *The Devil's Playground* and perhaps a little less so in *The Chant of James Blacksmith*, though the film is magnificent anyway. The way he uses landscape is very unusual, there is a way he looks at faces. It doesn't come from the book. *The Chant of James Blacksmith* is a marvelous novel, but it has a totally different sensibility. When you see a Schepisi film you are responding to his sensibility. When you see Bruce Beresford's *The Getting of Wisdom*, you are responding to a craftsman's view of something that is already finished.

In your review of one Schepisi film, you praise "the unity" of the way he presents his characters. What is the difference between that unity and the casualness of a Bruce Beresford?

His unity is a sense of proportion, a wonderful sense of what is due people. People in his films can do some terrible things but you don't see them as villains, you see them in terms of what made them do those things. Take, for example, the monster in *James Blacksmith*. By the end, it is really too tragically because he knows that he is responsible for what happened to James.

With other directors, it is very often pedantry, a learned thing, whereas with Schepisi it is a found thing. You feel that he is making his own voice. It is a great gift.



Director Fred Schepisi tripled: "His films are full of personal obsession. You can feel it in *The Don's Playground* (left) and perhaps a little less in *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (center). This beauty is a sense of proportion, a wonderful sense of what is due people."

Jana Rannow also had this kind of balance and surety. He never sentimentalized people and turned them into monster victims.

The wonderful thing in *Jimmie Blacksmith*, which keeps it from being just an ideological film, is that you feel for each of the characters. They're wonderful. The schoolteacher, for example, who could have been made to appear horrid, is quite heroic in his own terms.

You have criticized "Chariots of Fire" for being "the best Australian film made in England" and for what you call "its technological lycrism." What's the difference between that and Schepisi's visual lycrism?

With Schepisi, I never feel the technology is what makes his lycrism possible. In *Chariots of Fire*, every race is lycrized and the characters don't mean that much to you. It is set up so that you want the two men to win and, when they finally do win, the audience is meant to feel good. But the viewer reads that film as very old-fashioned. That is why it can open so easily to a wide audience; it doesn't upset people in any way. Good films tend to provide a certain amount of resistance. They buy people because they tend to show you off in ways you didn't know about. They make you feel things in a way that you hadn't quite experienced before.

Several recent films I have liked are *Shout the Moon*, about which a lot of people are arguing, past by, and *Fremantle from Heaven*, which has a certain authority that disturbs people. People think it is cynical, whereas it is perhaps one of the least cynical films around.

Then there is a film like *Personal Best*, which deals with women athletes. You can feel the director's obsession; he really loves these women. The camera seems to

be carrying out the director's intention.

In Australian films, you never find that sense of personality behind them, with the exception of Schepisi. Bruce Beresford is, for one, perhaps one of the most sensitive of directors. There is a certain gloomy, dreamy fidelity in his work. The sheer lack of imagination is perhaps his greatest weapon.

Yet, it is precisely a notion of integrity or authenticity that people seem to be responding to in Australian films...

Australian films are new and almost always set in the past. If they were set in contemporary circumstances, people would view them very differently.

Now, it is understandable that Australians, who have not had a

strong cinema movement for many years, want to go back to their roots and see how Australia became what it is now. But I don't think they're showing this. They're showing us what the Victorian novelist thought was going on.

Will you be more interested in the contemporary Australian films as they are released?

Well, *The Last Wave* is contemporary, but it is preposterous also. That is certainly not what I mean.

Yes, I would love to see films set in contemporary circumstances, because it is very exciting to see a new culture revealed. And one of the films that is wonderful for us is your film, in the sense of the landscape, which is so different from our own. Now the little film *Strange Behaviour* (*Dead Kids*), which was shot in Australia (New Zealand), although it pretends to be set in this country, was great fun because the light is so different. I must say I enjoyed the film. For a little better movie, it was very well done.

Do you get that sense of the landscape from other Australian films?

Oh yes. My *Belmont Career* is very beautiful shot, and Don McAlpine is a fine cinematographer. Most Australian films are terribly well done, including *Caddy*. Even there, and it is in period, we have a sense of a civilization different from our own. You see the pubs and the working-class districts, and they are a little more interesting than the country estates. We have had an awful lot of the country-estate approach-to-life in American films, 40 or 50 years ago.

How do you respond to the parallel made between the Australian cinema and the films of the old West?

"Bruce Beresford is, for me, perhaps one of the most academic of directors... The sheer lack of imagination is perhaps his greatest weapon."

Pauline Kael





Left: Peter Weir's "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford" (1976). Middle: Michael Loughlin's "The Last Wave" (1977). Right: The Boat People (1977). The scenes are from American films I have seen from Australia.

I think they are very different. The Australian films are more, in general, with a high degree of craftsmanship, self-consciousness and awareness, whereas the old Westerns were thrown together. They were shot quickly by people who didn't think too much about what they were doing. The Westerns that were carefully planned, like those by John Ford, have a different substance, of course. But much of the appeal of the Westerns was simply the quick shooting and the easy assumptions about bad and good men, and virtuous women.

I suppose the nearest to an American film I have seen from Australia was the fairly soft one-person film, *Alvin Purple*, which is like a lot of these American exploitation films.

Most of the serious films have been rather laborious, careful re-stagings of the past, and done very honestly. Certainly people learn a lot of skills when making those films. But after that, you are mis-estimated to know, "What are they going to do with these skills? Can they use those skills as contemporary material?"

Contemporary films have been made, but for some reason the period ones get released in the U.S. What is it about the American audience that leads distributors to make those choices?

There are many different kinds of American cinema, and generally a film from Australia has to open in an art house. The people who go to these are often the same people who go to very responsible French films or want to see the very responsible Czech films 30 years ago. It is an audience which was heavily trained on the theater. They do not like the very qualities in films that make film broadly seen then. It is not the audience which is going to go see what I thought was possibly the best

American film of last year, *Blowdown*, by Brian de Palma. That set house audience doesn't like violence or anything emotionally affecting, unless those emotions are very carefully controlled, as in *Kramer vs. Kramer*, where they're precisely refused out of context.

There is a security in a certain kind of film for an audience, and "Australia" is almost like a seal of good housekeeping on a film. If a young man goes out on a date, it is safe to take a girl to an American film, just as it is safe to go to *Coma*, *Conan*, or a Claude Lelouch film. These are films with a certain class appeal, because a film that is terribly bad can be appealing to people out on a date.

Sandy Barr was a great man. French and Czech films that don't have that comfortable quality . . .

Well, look at Francesco Truffaut's *The Last Metro*, which played at one theatre in New York

theater. But it is in French and it has a little bit of passion because Truffaut made it. The sense of Truffaut is almost a guarantee that the film is not going to upset you. He makes you feel comfortable.

Well, I don't go to the cinema to be made to feel comfortable. I go to see something different and exciting.

Do you think that there is a tendency for Americans in general to have a fairly parochial view of culture?

No, sometimes Americans will run to the cinema and go for something that is generally new and has exotic values. Films like *The Watermelon*, and the *Jesus* films and early *Breathless* films all spoke for a rebellious mood in the country, and the public responded well.

Also, you must remember that cinema-goers are not the same people they were 25 or 30 years

ago. The people who go regularly now tend to be better educated. They have different expectations and desires to the old mass audience. Unfortunately, both often respond with more hesitancy and vigor to good films than an educated audience does.

There is a sense that the Australian film is a sort of gap. In Hollywood you seem to have either films that deal with difficulties, where the heroes are heroes because of their primary enemy rather than evil and adversity, or you have the simple, moral fables along the lines of "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" . . .

That's right. There is a gap, and a developed because of the Vietnam War, which took up American culture and American view of themselves. American films became more cynical and knowledgeable, and people feel for escape to the European and the Australian film. That is very interesting because people used to go to foreign films for greater realism, particularly in terms of sex.

American films have simply not been the same since the 1960s. The change in American life affected our writers and directors profoundly, just as it affected almost every thinking person in the country. But it became too quick for people who are worried about going out of their houses for fear of being mugged. They certainly don't want to go see a film that

"There is a security in a certain kind of film for an audience, and 'Australia' is almost like a seal of good housekeeping on a film."

"American films became more cynical and knowledgeable, and people fled for escape to the European and the Australian films."

for a year. The film is not only set in the past, it is also so careful. It is the clearest view of the Nazi era I have ever seen. It seems the only truthful thing the Nazis did was to come into the theater and destroy the actors. There is no real passion in that film, no real excitement.

Take also *The Woman Next Door*, the new Truffaut film, which is making a very long run. It is like a very carefully made television show. There's nothing in it. It is very dull technically, and you can hear the dialogue any night on

the radio. The people who go regularly now tend to be better educated. They have different expectations and desires to the old mass audience. Unfortunately, both often respond with more hesitancy and vigor to good films than an educated audience does.

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simple, moral fables along the lines of "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" . . . That's right. There is a gap, and a developed because of the Vietnam War, which took up American culture and American view of themselves. American films became more cynical and knowledgeable, and people feel for escape to the European and the Australian film. That is very interesting because people used to go to foreign films for greater realism, particularly in terms of sex.

It has been suggested that what we are seeing, especially in these 19th Century films, is some sort of new frontier. Do you have that sense at all?

No, truthfully. When we are in a culture that is some way in



"... the women who read *Kinship* and have remained would find the same kind of pleasure in seeing *My Brilliant Career* because it says, 'By my own superiority I can do anything.' And, finally, the girl is so superior she has to see needs other."

played by problems similar to our own, although you have your Aboriginals as tucked away in some of the films that they're not very visible. In some films, they are not visible at all.

You also have a huge, rough country that was settled by people who weren't exactly nobility. The people who went to Australia were very much like the people who came to the U.S. We are all aware of what we are descended from. We are people who are outcasts, slaves or haves, people with the excitement of going to a new place.

One of the things that is appealing about Australian films is that while they are very traditional in a lot of ways, there is a new sort of hero. The macho, sexist male has disappeared in some extent, and there is a greater degree of vulnerability and sensitivity...

Well, that is true in American films, too. There is a fear of showing the real conflict. For example, a film like *Kramer vs. Kramer* is a one job from the start. You have a husband who is so much like the child that of course he has to deal up with him, if you had had a teacher-male figure, the audience might not have been easily so soft as its feelings.

At the start of the film the wife is so unhappy. What is the entrapment about? It isn't really clear, except that she hasn't found her own fulfillment. Well, when fulfillment is finally described to you, it seems that it is working for one of the women's magazines as a graphic artist of some kind. I don't really think that's very fulfilling. Roughly, we know that an intelligent, gifted woman with a child is able to find some work at home, as is able to work part-time.

In this marriage there had to be some sexual tension and confusion, but none of that was spelled out. It simply became a tribute to

the new wonderful male who wants to be a full parent.

That awful word parenting has developed in the language, and it stands for something which I think is essentially a vague. After all, men were always fathers and a lot of women have worked before.

Well, the macho male now is only shown to us in American films as a villain. But we had that as early as *Canal Knowledge*. The Jack Nicholson character was a memoiristic portrait of the caustic male, and he had to lose everything at the end. He had to be a real nothing. Well, a lot of macho men seem to do very well in their lives and careers, and they can be very smart in other areas. The films now tend to show us these men as totally ugly in spirit. They don't show us a macho man with that as only one aspect of his personality.

"... what could be more flattering for adolescent girls than the idea that even when they get the men of their dreams, they say, 'No, I shall go out and forge my own destiny.' There is an awful lot of nonsense in that notion."

What is your reaction to the treatment of women and women's issues in the Australian films that deal specifically with those things?

Well, they have been very sympathetic to women's issues, as in *The Getting of Wisdom* and *My Brilliant Career*. But *My Brilliant Career* is really an absurd situation because the girl flirts with a man for most of the film, and we assume that she is in love with him. She suddenly shows jealousy of him, but when he proposes to her she says no and pulls back at home as if that wasn't what she had in mind all along. I certainly thought that was what she had in mind.

It is a very confusing film because it doesn't go into why she

was flirting with him all that time. If it wasn't sexual, what was it? Was she just looking for a friend, as the later claimed? If so, she was very odd, confused and misguided. I have never seen such out-of-control flirting throughout a whole film and then total rejection. He had a perfect right to think, "Well, what were you wanting me for?"

One of the things that is happening in the Australian films is that they use 19th Century settings but impose a sort of 20th Century gentility...

There is a gentility all right. In the case of *My Brilliant Career* I think that worked perfectly for the American audience. There haven't been many feminist films come out of Hollywood, and that film seemed to satisfy every possible

own superiority I can do anything." And, finally, the girl is so superior she has no sex needs either.

You have chosen not to see a couple of Australian films. Is this a permanent state of affairs?

I hope so. I live in a country town which has a very good cable system. Often films that I couldn't face seeing in a theatre I can watch at home on television. I have a good up in the kitchen and, while I'm firing vegetables, I don't mind watching any films.

At a certain point, for example, I decided I was not going to watch an evening Australian standard film by Michael Wajsbart. I simply said what he does and there is something that offends me in his work. I also don't wish to see a John Avildsen film because I think he's a buffoon as a director.

So, you develop certain kinds of instincts for what you want to see. I would like criticism to be a pleasure. I don't want it to be a duty. If you find yourself to cover things as a matter of duty, you turn into a task.

Do you intend to see some of the new Australian films?

Well, it all depends on what they are.

How will you decide?

If you know who the director is and what his work is like, you can usually judge from the publicity material.

What about a film by a new director?

Well, I would almost always see a film of a new director because you can't judge anything about a film if you haven't seen some of the director's work. But I have seen 20 films of some direc-



Australian films have been very sympathetic to women's issues, as in *The Getting of Wisdom* (left) and *My Brilliant Career* (right). Most Australian films are critically well done, including *Crush*.

tors, and you get a pretty good sense of what you are going to get in the twenty-five, although every once in a while a director really surprises you. I was completely surprised by Alex Parker's work in *Shoot the Moon*, for example. I had seen his previous three films and could not have guessed he would direct it as effectively as he did. It was only when I saw a photograph of him and his family, and realized how close they looked to Albert Finney and the children in *Shoot the Moon*, that I made the connection.

Are you aware of pressure from distributors as a member of the press? Are you courted by them?

They have given up on me. They gave me a very bad time when I was younger. They hated the film screenings because they couldn't count on me for the reviews they wanted. It was difficult for me to write a review because I had to go to the theater the first day a picture opened. Fortunately, I am a very fast writer.

The way they generally put pressure on critics is through the advertisement department. The loss of theater advertising has been a considerable factor in the collapse of certain American newspapers. But I am lucky enough now to work for a magazine that is sufficiently independent not to be concerned about me costing them advertising. But I have worked for other magazines when the loss of that advertising was significant enough for them to let me go.

Given the cynical nature of the reviews that a foreign film gets, how does that make you feel as a reviewer?

Well, if I don't like a foreign film, I tend not to review it. There are plenty of big, bad films that you can kick in the head. So I won't review a foreign film that

doesn't stand much chance. You lose your discretion.

I do the same thing with small American films, if I don't like them, I don't review them. It is just too unpleasant to be hard on somebody who is trying to make a tough time anyway.

What do you think the place of foreign films in the American cinema scene is, or should be?

Well, it should be even larger than it is. American films go all

over the world, yet we don't see enough foreign films here. There was a period when Japanese films were very popular, but that died away. A lot depends on a single distributor. For a while, we saw a great many Italian films and Indian films because Edward Hansen distributed them. When he died, there was nobody quite in his position.

Two or three people will make a difference to whether a national cinema is imported.

As you know, a crisis can do

only so much. You can give all your space to a magazine or an Indian film, but unless that distributor has the wherewithal to publicize a quote from your review, that most work people are going to forget what you wrote.

It seems strange in a way that the U.S. has for 50 years been the world's biggest exporter of popular culture and films, but seems to support very little....

Maybe it is related to the fact that the greatness of American film is their crude wisdom, and that Americans trained on this have a harder time adjusting to films from abroad which have a much slower rhythm and a different temperament. But the people who were trained on those American action films now sit at home watching television, and newer generations of older people want something that seems more cultured. So they often reject American films, which are taught in the middle. Sometimes wonderful movies film don't have anything like the audience they should in this country.

There's an interesting line in Wim Wenders' "King of the Road" about American culture: "They colonized our sub-conscious."

I think that's true. When I meet foreign directors I am often amazed at their over-estimation of Hollywood. They feel like stepchildren of the Hollywood industry. They want desperately to work there, because for them that's real filmmaking, whereas what they do in Europe or South America is just playing around. They want to help colonize the world. They don't realize how bad a lot of Hollywood filmmaking is, at its effect. But even when they realize this, they still want to be in Hollywood because it represents pleasure and excitement to them. *



When Australians take a novel, and put carefully and thoughtfully behind it, they are giving you a pre-organized experience. When you see Bruce Beresford's *The Getting of Wisdom*, you are regarding it as a pre-organized view of something that is already finished.

Mari Kuttuva

New British Films

American Independents

The documentary features are very much in keeping with special export sales, like *Norfolk Island's* outrageous *The Case of the Lagoon Witches*, came up Marshall told other political work on New & Close to fit The Punishment by Stephen Mark and Robert Masi, is a documentary investigation telling the story of making *Ball of the Earth* in 1954, *unrehearsed* in semi-second by filmmaker had sisters prohibited during the McCarthy era, *The Atomic Cafe*

Kevin Rafferty, Joyce Leader and Pierre Rafferty is a full-length movie loosely collected from U.S. propaganda teaching films during the 1940s and '50s revealing the horrifying reality and irreparable damage inflicted on Germany from Washington about nuclear weapons.

These three films together give a clear & depressing picture of American politics during the Cold War. The period was also determined by a contemporary from history but completely evading the simplifications of hindsight, is *Amadeus* (Rafferty) a Cautionary tale. *With Willard the Duke*, which has already been seen in Australia before reaching Edinburgh.

Australian Contributions

Of the night Australian short film. Four were by Arthur and Conna Carroll. One-way is distinct feature. They too should be issued in some one at a time, and every (open festival) programme. There was also Peter Farmer's *Journey To The End Of Night*, which is unfortunately missed together with *Angels Of War*, but my attention should not matter by the time this report can appear: they should be as simply reviewed in Australia. From New Zealand, there was a short as well as *The Surrogate*. I missed the last and discussed *The Surrogate* from Conna. From Japan, there was a piece of high-tech cinema, *Spells Of Tension* by Yoshio Terasaki. A tale of fiction by sex and not women's age of water. In nature drama, and the even darker mood of *1848* de Luce. A few new films from the Philippines: *Kasapalaran* and *Salak* at #1 were after by last undisturbed, although *Salak* denounces by *Amadeus* (Pines) and *Salak* (Pines) in 1978 but only recently produced with proper title and a superb piece, a short political production during the *Quasi* a. *Salak* is a tragedy. *Salak* is a low end piece report, about Muslim and Indian immigrants in Canada. *At the End*, the last record of an almost 1000 century-old village for extinction. *Not a thing* (the experienced artist) *Salak* is found an unexpected echo in the Scottish landscape during *Penelope* but it is just a piece of film about up to any kind of some explanation will provide, and is still being taught today by the "teachers", the (partly) *Salak* *Salak* is the last film of the Scottish leaders.



Michael McQueen as Lord Adrian, a young man at Oxford. Michael McQueen's Producer

European Roundup

Apart from Britain and the U.S. the largest batch of new films came from West Germany. They included Werner Herzog's *Encounters*, the leaders by Peter von Thunhausen. *Encounters* is a film about the spiritual journey of a highway to the West and the *Encounters* *The Life Trap* and many documents. *Encounters* is a film about the spiritual journey of a highway to the West and the *Encounters* *The Life Trap* and many documents. *Encounters* is a film about the spiritual journey of a highway to the West and the *Encounters* *The Life Trap* and many documents.

intended to reflect an attention to the deceptive brightness of the West is likely to survive remote local circles. It is a subtle reminder about the East German uprisings against the East. It is a beautiful young woman. *Encounters* is a film about the spiritual journey of a highway to the West and the *Encounters* *The Life Trap* and many documents. *Encounters* is a film about the spiritual journey of a highway to the West and the *Encounters* *The Life Trap* and many documents.

Wage In Switzerland showing a certain eye view of the Queen's visit which promotes all the present surrounding her and the Queen's visit which is a positive argument in all of 5 minutes, for and against capitalism.

There were also a handful of documentaries around from France before the fall of Bokanovic including a couple by Bokanovic and Lacombe. With one last, they will turn a (narrow) package that could be noted (even) Australia. But I missed to do my best to end all the first version of *Virginie Virelli*. The others, such as *Amadeus* and *Salak*, and respectively included into a situation English.

Cheers for Retrospectives

The prominence of time from the U.S. and efficient Western Europe results in spite of a wide range of subjects and styles is a consistent trend to a small number is assigned (the) to describe. Perhaps it could be summed up as a trend to a small number of subjects, showing the impact of wealth on development, the influence of technology on anti-humanism, and the impact of technology on the human condition. The others, such as *Amadeus* and *Salak*, and respectively included into a situation English.

The retrospective called "British Films" — The construction of Scotland on Film and Television — showed the importance of this topic by its content. The film dated mostly from the 1930s and 1940s, ranging from romantic such as *Scottish Fiddle* (1934), *Scottish Fiddle* (1934), and *Scottish Fiddle* (1934) to *Scottish Fiddle* (1934) and *Scottish Fiddle* (1934). The film dated mostly from the 1930s and 1940s, ranging from romantic such as *Scottish Fiddle* (1934), *Scottish Fiddle* (1934), and *Scottish Fiddle* (1934) to *Scottish Fiddle* (1934) and *Scottish Fiddle* (1934).



Joe Mervin as a child in an atomic episode 8-29 from Atom Power, Atom Power and Pierre Rafferty's montage on U.S. propaganda. The Atomic Café



A View to the West, Atom Power, Atom Power's "high-tech report, about Muslim and Indian immigrants in Canada"



WENDY HUGHES

*Wendy Hughes is one of Australia's most acclaimed actresses, with striking performances in **Newsfront**, **My Brilliant Career**, **Petersen** and now **Lonely Hearts**. Here she talks to producer Richard Brennan.*

When did you first become involved in "Lonely Hearts"?

About two years ago when Paul Cox mentioned that he and Norman Kaye were thinking of doing a script together. I said, "Yes, it sounds great", thinking I would never hear anything more about it. But six months later Paul sent me a draft, and I thought it read very well.

I was involved from then on and had a lot to say on what I wanted the character to do, what her background was like and that kind of thing.

How much did the script change when John Clarke was brought in as co-writer?

John tightened the script and added a few more humorous situations and some witty dialogue. The actual form and story didn't change at all, though he deleted the less relevant and fuzzy parts.

Most of the films made last year cost \$1.5 to \$2 million, "Lonely Hearts" cost less than half that. Was it difficult raising the money for a film about a relationship between a thirtyish spinster, who is fairly inhibited, and a middle-aged bachelor, who is rather difficult?

Yes. Paul went to quite a few people without much success. Then he approached John B. Murray (producer), who got Adams Packer to finance it.

Paul actually wanted to work on an even lower budget but Adams Packer wanted a hit.

That extra money was probably well spent. The film doesn't look over-budgeted...

Yes. It is just that Paul has the thing about how one should be able to do low-budget films. He is opposed to really big budget films and calls anything more than \$1.5 million a waste.

But, of course, some films really do need \$3 or \$4 million. It just depends.

On a film such as *Lonely Hearts*, which is about personal relations ships and is simple logistically, with no great location work, the budget should be kept small. But that extra money was worth it. It made sure the film didn't look cheap.

How long did you spend on "Lonely Hearts"?

Two weeks in rehearsal and a six-week shoot.

Did Cox cast you in the role of Patricia, which isn't the last one might normally think you'd want to play, because you had worked together before?

Yes. I had developed a great rapport with Paul and really trusted him and his sensitivity. I wanted to play Patricia because it was so different to what I had done before. And when I said to people I was playing a 30-year-old virgin, they'd just laugh. "It's okay, it's a comedy", I'd say in justification.

I don't think many directors would have cast me in that role.

Was "Kester" the first time you had worked with Cox?

Yes. Then I did a short documentary on child birth at the Royal Women's Hospital [Bentley].



Above: Patricia (Wendy Hughes) and Peter (Norman Krasna) meet for the first time in the Melbourne Warehouse. Right and below: Patricia and Peter star in Krasna's *Paul Galt's Lonely Hearts*.

Had you worked with Norman Krasna before?

No, though he was terrific to work with. He has been around for a long time in the Melbourne Theatre Company, and been on screen. He has also done a lot of television.

Norman is actually a highly-accomplished musician. He spent a lot of time devoting himself to music, and string came out of this.

A lot of "Lonely Hearts" looks improvised, particularly in the scenes with Joan Haywood and Chris Haywood...

No, it wasn't heavily improvised. We changed lines if they didn't work, and added odd things, but that was all.

Paul was actually very loose and



encouraged us to experiment, but most of the time we kept to the script.

It is just that a lot of the dialogue appears to come off people's tongues...

That's right. That has to do with the naturalistic way Paul shoots

scenes. It is never super glossy or fake.

Yet "Lonely Hearts" is a beautiful film to look at. I think he used a Greek musician on "Koster" and...

No, he used an Italian musician (Vittorio Bortolotti) on Kostas.

and a Russian one (Yuri Sokolov) on Lonely Hearts. His cameramen really have a good grasp of English.

Of the 30 or so 35mm feature films made last year, you worked on three...

Yes, *Don't for God, A Danger-*



own *Summer and Lonely Hearts* — I think in that order.

"*Dead for Fear?*" was the third time you have worked with Tom Barnall. How do you find working with him?

Tim is terrific. He is very different from Paul, mainly because the subject matter is always so different.

Dead for Fear, which Tim did with the other two Barnalls [Tom Barnall, co-producer, and Dan Barnall, director of photography], was one of my most enjoyable experiences.

On *Peterson*, which was my first film, I didn't know whether I was Arthur or Martha half the time.

As for *High Redding*, Tim didn't direct it [Director: Igor Austen]. Tim produced it, Tim was first assistant director and associate

my second or so flatterer, and I found the whole American feel — it was done for Universal — slightly disturbing. And there was an American actor, Ben Murphy, with whom I didn't quite get on.

It was just an action film, and the bits were more important than anything else. Paul was very efficient, but we didn't have any in-depth discussions about the character. It was left up to me mainly. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. I tried hard. I haven't seen it for so long. I think I'd die if I did.

As for *Woodwork*, I only had a small part, but Claude was lovely, and very British — quite different to the American. Claude went into things with far more depth. The script allowed for it, too.

So, if you like the part, you have no worries about working with



producer, and Dan was cinematographer. Again one had a three-way thing going, which I thought was wonderful.

"*Dead for Fear?*" was a project that had been around for some time. . . .

Yes, and sometimes I think it is a little dated. The role I was playing, in particular, seemed more a part of the early 1970s, when in fact it was written by David Williamson. Back then should have had but not together by now — maybe. She quotes quite a tough feminist line, which I think relates more to the early 1970s than now.

What has happened with "A Dangerous Summer"?

No idea, I haven't seen it, and I don't even know if it is going to be released. No one's told me.

You have done 16 films, two of them with overseas directors: Earl Bellamy on "Valuable Racers" and Charles Watson on "Woodwork". How did you find working with them?

Okay. *Saltcrack Racers* was only



foreign directors, have or oversee. . . .

None, if the part is right. It can be really stimulating to work with people from a different country, or with a different language they have different ways of looking at things.

A couple of years ago there was controversy about overseas actors coming to work in Australia. There seems to be far less of that

happening today. What do you think the reasons for that are?

Action Equity made it a bit tougher to bring them in and producers and directors realized that they are not essential. So many of the films that have made a big wave overseas have had no foreign actors involved, such as *My Brilliant Career*, *Mad Max* and *Caddy*.



Arthur, Peter and Patricia meet again in *Dead for Fear*. Left: Patricia confronts her parents (the Gordon and Anne Newman) over her relationship with Peter, who does this film; center: a final scene between Arthur, Peter and a bank supervisor (Richard Whalley) in *Lonely Hearts*.



Which film have you most enjoyed doing?

I think *Lonely Hearts*, because of the part. In all the other films the characters have never been fully developed. My role in *My Brilliant Career* wasn't revealed out — or, if it was, the scenes where this happened didn't appear on screen.

The same thing happened with *Newsworld*. There wasn't a con-

plete character on screen, and there were no really heavy scenes for me to get my teeth stuck into. It was all anecdotal and slightly engaging.

You have mentioned all your recent films except "Touch and Go". . . .

I never saw it. I don't know what happened to it, except that it

did a week in Brisbane.

How important do you find rehearsal time on a film?

Absolutely essential. That's one reason I really admire Kerro Arthur. She had to fight hard for two weeks of rehearsal before we went into it, which was essential on something involving a fine line between melodrama and apocalyptic soap.

With something like *Touch and Go*, there was no rehearsal, other than a few days. But more and more directors are demanding it today. You save so much time in the end.

What about your stage work? You did a lot in the early 1970s. . . .

Yes, and I didn't do anything again until *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* last year.

Is that the first time you and John Hargreaves have worked together?

On stage, yes. We had done *Woodwork*, but there wasn't any great scenes between us in that *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was the first time since *WIDA* that we had done a big thing together.

You obviously like working with one another, it is a pity nobody has taken fuller advantage of that. . .

Well, we are together again in *Careful He Might Hear You*. John is playing the one man in my life, though he is really a fragment of my imagination. He is a bit of a noope, a no proper adventurer.

You are also doing a television series "Return to Eden" is that rightness with "Careful He Might Hear You"?

I have a day off after Eden before I start Careful. It is going to be really difficult to swap characters; they are at opposite ends of the pole.

In *Careful He Might Hear You*, I play a very self-commanded, elegant, pristine, 30-year-old woman. I don't think she has had an affair in her life. There is some big lying up there. She's a very controlled lady, calculating and immaculate.

She is sort of a 1950s version of Patricia in *Land's End*, only that she is more complicated and not so warty.

Yes, a teleplay by Alan Burt called *Careful He Might Hear You*. I really enjoyed that because it was like doing a stage play. We used to do 30-minute acts, which were a real challenge — for the crew as well. It was something I could really get my teeth stuck into. It wasn't two little sentences and out!

What about "Lucinda Brayford"?

I only saw one episode, which was where I was a 47-year-old girl. It appeared very slow and I seemed to be trying so hard to be young. But I just forgot about my age and played the part. It might have been a lot better.

I loved working on *Lucinda*, and found it challenging, particularly playing Lucinda when she is 40.

You revealed a large and a funny, I think, for "Power Without Glory"?

Yes. I had a terrific part in *Power Without Glory*. She was a

great lady and someone I could identify with. That always makes it easier.

You did a television film four or five years ago called "The Abolitionist", for which you also won an award...



Yes, I did that after *Power Without Glory*. It was one of those spate of telefeatures produced by Bob Fleming, and from a Tony Margherita script. It was about a woman who decided to have a baby on her own without a man. Paul Kelly directed it and we shot it in three weeks. It was a really good experience, even though we didn't get any rehearsal. We were shooting about 16-hour days.

Have you any preference for stage, film or television?

I think the preference is film, just because you have more time than with television. You can dwell on things, and go for quality. But I do like the stage. I must admit. It's so different. It took me two weeks on *Car on a Hot Tin Roof* to stop being nervous every time I stepped on stage.

When I step in front of a camera, I don't get butterflies any more. I might be a bit apprehensive about whether I can do some-



Top: Patricia Miller (*Orlando*) and child in *you*; Edith (*The Abolitionist*). Second: Kincaid and Hughes in *Paul's Heartbreak*. Above right: Sophia Loren (*Highway*), an actress from the *Orlando* film. A *Running Man* (left) Patricia Kincaid, *Orlando* a tough *Orlando* line in *Tom Hanks's* *Heat* for *Heat*.

What about "Return to Eden"?

The woman I play is a discontented, wealthy socialite, who falls desperately in love with her best friend's recent husband. He is much younger than her friend, and I have a passionate affair with him. The guy then kills his wife, and I am an accomplice because I don't help her escape. I then turn into a helpless alcoholic, a screaming, guilt-ridden mess. It's a quite a different role.

Is there anything you have done for television that you particularly like?



thing well, but I don't get that dreadful shivering that happens on stage.

There is something more sensitive about film. You can be more natural and play it more instinctively. With the stage, you have to project your voice so that everyone can hear. It is also slightly more stylized.

What are you doing after "Careful He Might Hear You"?

No idea. I don't know if anything is going.

Have you any plans to work again with Paul Cox?

I'd love to work with him again, and there is talk of something happening again February or something. A script has been written, but he hasn't the money together yet. It will be on a low budget, and that is four or five weeks. It will be great if it happens. *

PICTURE PREVIEW

THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN INVINCIBLE

The Return of Captain Invincible: a madcap, musical comedy-adventure where the flying super hero crushes Nazis, thwarts bootleggers, helps boy scouts and battles Moscow.

Return is directed by Philippe Mora, from a screenplay by Andrew Galy and Steven de Souza, for producers Andrew Galy. It stars Alan Arkin as Captain Invincible, with Christopher Lee, Kari Matchett, Bill Moseley, Graham Kennedy, Michael Pate, Harry Garden and John Meehan.



Clockwise from top right: Captain Invincible (Alan Arkin) takes aim in the great pre-fight battle; Kari Matchett (left) in New York, the end of the film; Christopher Lee (right) and Moseley; Christopher Lee (left) and Moseley (right) in the song of the Sydney Opera House, where Captain Invincible has broken his way to justice; Captain Invincible (Alan Arkin) in the song of the Sydney Opera House.



The National Industry Training Scheme

Daniela Torsh*

The National Industry Training Scheme, the first Australia-wide, on-the-job training program for the film industry, is completed. The trial scheme finished in June with an impressive record of 80 per cent of trainees employed.

Major sponsor of the training scheme, the Australian Film Commission, is now looking at where to concentrate further funds for training. General manager Joe Skrzynecki said:

"The AFC saw itself acting as a catalyst with a one-off program designed to stave in a transient shortage of skills and to stimulate longer term action by other bodies."

Discussions on the future direction of the National Industry Training Scheme are under way between the AFC, the Australian Film and Television School, and the Film and Television Production Association.

The National Industry Training Scheme was set up by the AFC in March 1981 (see Fig. 1). The scheme was significant for the extent of co-operation throughout the industry, and included government film bodies in South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania, as well as the AFC, the APTS, and production houses and studios in most states.

The scheme cost approximately \$285,000 and was aimed at short-term improvement in the number of trained film technicians in Australia.

* Daniela Torsh was the co-ordinator and one of four consultants for the AFC on the National Industry Training Scheme.

It encompassed a collection of short-term training activities:

- on-the-job training;
- grants to craft guilds;
- short courses at the APTS Open Program;
- specialist seminars; and
- catalyst appointments in Western Australia and Tasmania.

Table 1 shows the list of jobs in the on-the-job training scheme, the numbers of trainees in each job and the state where they worked. Overall, there were 13 different job categories for on-the-job training, which makes the National Industry Training Scheme unique.

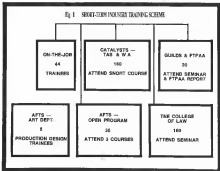
The training scheme ran this year by the New South Wales Film Corporation (its first training initiative), by comparison, has confined itself to five job categories and takes only five trainees, who are paid an annual salary of \$15,000 each for one year. At the APTS, where students are trained for a range of jobs, no day there has been no training for performers, props, set construction, and no specific courses for continuity, sound mixing or production design in the full-time program.

In its approach and at breadth, the National Industry Training Scheme has pioneered the way for on-the-job and short-term training for film and television. In its first 13 months, more than 430 people in the film industry were assisted in upgrading their skills. The AFC contributed about 60 per cent of funding, while the state corporations, the APTS and private employers contributed the remainder.

Background

The impetus for the scheme came from the unprecedented level of films produced in the past financial year. Producers complained to the AFC that they could not get experienced technicians to make their films at the high level of expertise needed. Two

1. "The Life of Making Movies" was put together as part of the National Industry Training Scheme. See Cinema Papers, May 26, pp. 211, 241.



independent surveys of the industry, by the FTFAA and the research unit at the APTS, backed their claims and showed serious shortages of technicians.

The APTS then asked Malcolm Smith, executive producer of *Masque* and now working on the main series *The Migrant Experience*, to assess the extent of shortages in early 1981 and to recommend some immediate remedies.

"The Commission considers that such an initiative is important in trying to ensure that Australian films maintain the recognised quality which has attracted such notice at home and overseas", wrote the then chairman of the APTS, Ken Warr, in his 1981 annual report to the Minister for Home Affairs.

After talking to producers, production houses, government film bodies, rental and equipment suppliers, Smith confirmed that shortages were serious. He added several new categories to the program and outlined the scheme as a multi-layered approach aimed at spreading skills rather than increasing the "leech" of new people into the industry.

Major emphasis was on an months of full-time training on-the-job for an estimated 35 trainees, who would be employed in production houses and studios in a supplementary job reported under the guidance of an experienced technician. Smith approached the major production houses which had a constant supply of work to keep trainees busy and able to work in a variety of other commercial, documentary, television or film work.

Among the production firms which he negotiated were AAV Australia, The Film House, Creative Productions and Cinecine Films in Melbourne, Martin Williams Films in Brisbane, the eight film commissions of South Australia and Tasmania, and APTS, Film Australia and the Grandy Organisation in Sydney. Also in Sydney, production accountant Pring Carl of Manpower Services set up a training scheme for production assistants which involved working on feature films and attending lectures at the Open Program of the APTS. Carl concentrated on teaching the seven trainees the new computerised system also had devised for weekly cash flows and budgeting.

It was decided not to advertise the training scheme. Smith thought that suitable applicants could be found through "word of mouth", thus avoiding the high administrative costs of a lengthy selection process. A short article in the *Australian Financial Review* in early April cleared 150 written applications, which were checked and passed on to the relevant employers. Discussed applicants or people without previous work experience or training were advised they were ineligible.

A critical feature of the training scheme was the agreement by all employers that trainees would not take jobs from technicians and so they were paid at minimum rates for the job. The Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association was one of the organisations that Smith had obtained agreement and support from in his earlier national industry survey.

The scheme was similar to an apprenticeship, the main difference being that the period of training was six months and not four years, instead of attending classes at a technical college, trainees were encouraged to attend a relevant course at the Open Program of the APTS.

Administration of the training scheme was carried out by three part-time consultants for the APTS in addition to Smith as supervising consultant. The three were producers Orlia Berkeley, Tim Read and the author. The asset of a special task force which can be quickly

formed and disbanded when the job's over was one of the most important innovations of the National Industry Training Scheme as far as the APTS was concerned, according to Skrymgeour.

Production Design

A unexpected bonus for the scheme was a spirital project in pre-production design undertaken at the APTS, unexpected because it was not part of Smith's original blueprint but arose as a result of a timely approach halfway through the scheme by Richard Thomas, head of the full-time program. The APTS offered its diploma design students from other tertiary colleges the chance to work under Dennis Gentle, head of the set department. The students had eight months to make the transition from interior and graphic design in film and television.

Gentle, whose film credits include *Water in the Face* and who previously worked as head of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's design department, was excited about the scheme's success.

"My own impression of the project as a whole is that it is a total success. The final test will come when it is job finding time, of course, but I do think the attachments they went on introduced them to the industry. Some employers have already offered them jobs. Certainly all six of them will be equipped to work as young designers — the shortfall is in the opportunities."

With APTS assistance and the support of the tertiary colleges which "housed" their students, Gentle was able to virtually create a professional design department within the APTS. He took on the role of senior designer with the finding designers learning on-the-job as they "contracted" their work on the full-time students and often even to the APTS.

One of the student designers did the 1981 APTS handbook design and the invitations to attend showings of their diploma films. Another student designer did the sets, props, costumes and standby props for all the second year films. In addition to the "in-house" work, the designers went on attachments for about four weeks each to one of the Grandy Organisation, Cineford, ATN 7 in Sydney, and the ABC in Melbourne and Sydney.

The six students selected by Gentle — four from the Sydney College of the Arts and two from Swinburne Art School in Melbourne — started their training in November 1981 and



The production design training school at the Australian Film and Television School. Dennis Gentle, head of the set department, is on the left.

worked through the holiday period. By the time the full-time students came back from their vacations, they found on student designers available to work on their productions. This had not happened before in the eight years of the full-time program. Gentle said:

"Their training was broad in concept, aimed not only at the transfer of knowledge, but encouraging personality development and a general polishing of their attitudes and awareness."

Gentle wanted them to be able to work as an assistant designer when they finished working with him. Five of the trainees were 21 and one was 22 years old. According to Gentle, they soon began to emerge as excellent design material. They worked with Graeme Murphy on a production of the Sydney Dance Company, worked films such as *Q & A*, 1985 and *The Legend of Captain Jack*, made visits to television stations and the Open House to look at staging and special effects, and went to the theatre, films and the National Institute of Dramatic Arts. They were quick to learn, and what they were taught, absorbed the benefits of exposure to the various experiences and became a well-trained and happy group.

By the time they were due to leave in July, all six reported what they now saw as an unusual ability to depart. The full-time program was put moving into high gear for student productions but the designers had to return to their home colleges to complete their final semesters and qualify for their diploma.

Thomas is enthusiastic about the possibility of another group of five student designers training for a full year in 1983. However, funding for the course is still uncertain.

Table 1: "ON-THE-JOB" TRAINING SCHEME

NUMBER OF GRADUATES BY OCCUPATION AND STATE AS AT JUNE 30, 1982

Occupation	N.S.W.	VIC.	E.A.	W.A.	TAS.	G.D.	TOTAL
Accountant	6	1					7
Editing Assistant							
Exec. Board Asst.	2	2	1			1	6
Video Editor							
Production Assistant	2	3	1				6
Cartoonist	1	2					3
Sound Assistant	1		2				3
Sound Mixing	2						2
Camera Assistant	2	1	1				4
Production Manager							
Assistant Director	2			2	1		5
Set Construction		1					1
Special Effects							
Set Dressing	1						1
Production Design	4	2					6
Artist	1						1
TOTAL	24	16	7	2	1	1	50



Geoff with Scott Hill, an attachment from the Queensland Film Institute diploma course

Craft Guilds

The remainder of the scheme extended to the craft guilds. Smith had proposed special "boot" training grants to stimulate the guilds to set up their own programs for short-term training. Grants went to the Australian Cinematographers Society, the Australian Writers Guild and the FIPAA.

The ACS has plans for a national round of lighting seminars to be led by Don McAlpine, Russell Boyd, Phil Pike and John Luks, among others.

The AWG proportioned its money to three states: Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Each state initially was asked to look at its local training needs in Melbourne, the AWG decided that its monthly workshops would be greatly improved by having scripts and craft materials locally available as a resource centre for writers. The script collection is being bought, housed and catalogued, and the centre is well on its way with a room in the old YMCA building next door to the new Victorian Arts Centre.

In Adelaide, a seminar on writing for feature films and the state of the South Australian industry was held at the SAFC on the weekend of June 18. Bob George, local AWG secretary, says it concentrated on:

"the need to get the 21 participants to think about film as a commercial medium, to consider just what is required to get the public to go out and spend \$4 on a ticket."

Three local films (*Breaker Morant*, *Money Moves* and *Fordland*) were screened for discussion with their writers and producers present. Writers contributing to the panel discussion were dramatist Ken Ross, story editor Graeme Kinnear and two South Australian writers, Roger Dunn and John Emery.

In Perth, local AWG members will be invited to six television and feature seminars on writing for film and television arranged by Helen Boyd, executive director of the Perth branches of Film and Television. Her discussions with Jaan Andriana, secretary of the West Australian branch of the AWG, resulted in FIFT plans for video workshops of scripts in progress.

The FIPAA spent its grant on a detailed submission to the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs in Canberra for further funding



Former SAFC-AFC trainee, Anna Wilson, and writer Graeme Mitchell on the set of Quilch Western Sydney Open

of on-the-job training. The lengthy submission outlines the shortages of technicians in the film industry and the reasons for the shortages and the steps taken by the industry via the scheme described above. They asked the Department for a contribution of \$140,000 towards the total cost of training 21 technicians in 1982.

The FIPAA also proposed that an apprenticeship scheme be set up to ensure a new inflow of trained young people into the industry in future years. They see the apprenticeship system applying to jobs where no training is currently available: e.g., in set construction, electric, grips, special effects, make-up, laboratory and computer technicians, animation.

The apprenticeship system would be slightly different from the usual arrangement for, say, hairdressers to allow for the peculiarities of the film and television industry. The apprentice would be employed by the FIPAA, but lent to an individual employer for part of a three-year apprenticeship. That way, the apprentice gets a breadth of experience over the three years in, say, drama, documentary and commercials in film and videotape while working for a number of different producers. And the employer does not have to take on an apprentice for the whole three years.

If the employer realizes he hasn't enough work to keep an apprentice occupied, the apprentice can be lent to another member of the group of employers involved who has work. This kind of apprenticeship is called a group employee scheme and is in use in the building trade and by the Hunter Valley Board in New South Wales. It has been especially designed for



The rotating apprentice course: Michael Dalton and participants

industries where there is a lot of seasonal or fluctuating work and varying workloads among a large number of small businesses.

To support their claims for Commonwealth funding through the Skills in Personal program of the Department of Employment, the FIPAA conducted an industry survey of shortages and determined the type of short-term training most suitable for the industry's needs. The survey of 36 employer-members of the FIPAA was made in October 1981. It confirmed the shortages found in the by now three other recent surveys and also confirmed that employers were keen on setting up a short-term training scheme and apprenticeships. There was some division of opinion about whether apprenticeship or short-term training was preferable, depending on the kind of work the employer did.

Commercial producers, laboratories and equipment suppliers were more in favor of apprenticeships while feature film producers and television program makers preferred short-term attachments. Clearly this reflects the different needs of producers and suppliers. Feature films and often television series do not last long in production — at most six months — while commercials are made constantly throughout the year. Laboratories and equipment suppliers also run continuously.

Twenty-two employers said they would have work for an apprentice at times and on the projection of this sample an estimated 63 members of the FIPAA would be able to offer employment for apprentices at times. The type of job available for apprentices covered the entire range from script editor to laboratory technician to animator to grip.

Despite the strong evidence presented of industry support for combination of on-the-job training and a survey which shows that creating training does not fill industry's needs at present, the Department of Employment rejected the submission, claiming it did not fit the guidelines of the Skills in Personal scheme.

Perhaps the Department could set further into its crystal ball than the industry. Some observers believe feature film production will now-due from 40 films last year to perhaps fewer than 20 this year. The argument for further training seems harder to sustain in the face of a massive downturn in the production industry with large numbers of technicians remaining unemployed so they can get and pay the rest. A lot of technicians have been unemployed for months. Perhaps the continued training of young people for the film and television production industry is a statement of faith in the future viability of the film industry, but it grates against the hard reality of a bleak and uncertain economic climate and the persistence of out-of-work technicians in feature films. ★



RAY BARRETT

From Peter Thornton in The Troubadours to Captain Farrell in The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith and to Mike Stacey in Goodbye Paradise, Ray Barrett has been one of Australia's best actors. Here, Barrett talks to Mark Stiles about his latest film, and what it means to play that loveable failure, ex-Deputy Police Commissioner Mike Stacey.

How did you first become involved in "Goodbye Paradise"? Did screenwriters Bob Ellis and Denay Lawrence have you in mind for the part?

Yes. I am very flattered because this is the first film that has been written for me.

Bob and Denay conceived the film, and then we all went up to Surfer's Paradise for a week or more, soaking up the atmosphere. We also went up the Nungah, met various people and went into sleazy bars. This was about three years ago.

Bob is a great observer, and when I finally read the script, I thought, "You bastard, you've observed Barrett!" But I didn't admit it. I was flattered because Stacey is a living person. He is a failure really, but a loveable failure; a kind man at heart. Yet everything's slipped by him, and he hasn't achieved the things he's wanted to.

The character relates to a lot of people, including myself. Bob's put the finger on it. He is brilliant.

Did the director, Carl Schultz, come in later?

Yes. When Bob and I were talking about the production all those years ago, Bob asked me to produce it. We talked to a few people at the Gold Coast and they were quite interested, but I didn't hear any more. I then realised I couldn't produce it because I was in every scene of the film, and that is quite a pretty demanding over an eight-week shoot.

Then, Jane Scott came in as producer and raised the money. She is a wonderful producer and a very clever woman, who is going to do bigger and better things. She was always there, in control, but never seemed to interfere. She kept the crew together, and nobody felt left out. In the end, we were all devoted to her taste to see the picture, even the lowest of the low, from the runner to the dog trainer!

When Jane successfully did was keep people reassured that it was their picture as much as Jane's or Carl's or mine. And that is most important because I have been on so many productions where you get one little upset or jealousy running through a crew like wild-fire. That's dangerous, especially at the start of shooting.

Have you known any characters like Mike Stacey?

No.

I would love to know what it is like to be a writing.

Bob didn't go into it and neither did Carl. I accepted the fact that he was backing to write about his experience of working up through the police force in the structure of Deputy Police Commissioner. What I thought was more important was that Mike Stacey couldn't come to grips with it. He looks at the page, opens a bottle and then goes to the nightclub.

Stacey has been commissioned to write the book but writing has come through in the pictures, and finally the publisher said he has the go, after and

that the political factors push him up. People from his past emerge and they know him for his failures. He is down on his feet almost, and then he is told, "Here's four thousand dollars, find my daughter", which leads him into another area. He finds himself utterly backslid. All these people are about, and suddenly there is a snap.

What I found fascinating in the story was the fact that, through all this anger and ugliness, fighting and language, and through an alcoholic haze, Stacey was given the chance to show some tenderness. There are his moments with Kate (Kathryn Newton), for instance, and his putting the kid in bed. These touches give Stacey tremendous dimensions, which I find fascinating.

What was brilliant about the conception of the film, and the way Carl shot it, was that Stacey could tell the story.

The film starts with Stacey walking along Surfer's Paradise, and it is just his voice: "I love my wife, I met her long, I met my best friend of Johnnie Walker. I've been off the grid for so long." Then it cuts to Stacey walking along to his slummy boarding house, and immediately suggests the failure of the man. For the audience, this sets up the character straight away.

The movie-over is a marvelous guide to Stacey's thoughts...

Yes. It puts the audience in the picture. People can relate to the way's failures, idiosyncrasies and personal anguish.

But is Stacey a failure? He has been a Deputy Police Commissioner, and did receive an OBE in the 1976 New Year Honours...

He has done a hell of a lot in life, but in his own mind he has missed out on the sign that he might have wanted. Life is passing him by. You sense that in the scenes with Kathryn Newton, who is brilliant. I've fallen with Bob for killing Kate off, because we might have a sequel!

Another pleasing feature of the film is that the hero isn't 18 years old.

Well, for me Goodbye Paradise is a very healthy step forward in the Australian film industry, even though I don't think Bob and Denay intended to back previous wisdom when they wrote it. For one thing, it is not an adaptation of an Australian novel. It is a film we wanted to make! It will be terribly interesting to see if it is accepted in the general market.

I believe it was very well received in London, and in California where it was shown at Tribeca. It is the type of film, too, which I think people will look at and say, "My God!", especially Australian audiences because they have been conditioned to films about gold miners and shepherds. But I think we are all sick of that.

It is a little unfortunate that producers will say a film has to have the wide Australian outlook, sheep being shorned and all that. That is why I think Jane was very



Goodbye Paradise

Top: Mike Stacey (left above), right, meets his old friend Richard O'Brien (left below), who is captured in a scene from the musical. Right: Mike Stacey and his wife (left) and his son (right) and Stacey. Below: Mike Stacey (left) and his wife (right) and his son (right) and Stacey.



game by saying, "This has guts, a wonderful character and a fascinating story. This is a part!" It is unlike anything that has been produced in Australia before.

Yet it has a very Australian sense of humor to it . . .

Yes, though there is also a lovely step-up quickly which other films don't have. It is a great step forward in my opinion. And I don't say that just because I play the lead role, I would say the same no matter who played Stacey.

I hope it is a breakthrough because it will give producers and investors a little more courage to invest in an original screenplay, an original film, without going for security of a novel about the beefcakes on their cutting mats.

If Stacey were still Deputy Police Commissioner, how would he react to something like the Commonwealth Games Act, which allows the Queensland Government to control protest during the Games in Brisbane . . .

I think Stacey would be more sympathetic to the protesters.

The reason I ask is because I think part of the appeal of Stacey's character is that he is not an inflexible, authoritarian cop . . .

That's exactly why I think Stacey would be sympathetic to people who want to demonstrate for a cause. If he were still Deputy Police Commissioner, he would be a thorn in the side of the state government. I don't think he would allow things to run riot, but he would be certainly against the authoritarian approach on this issue. He would fight back and end to see that justice is done and that everybody had a say. I think he's undermined, for instance. He's knowledgeable enough, for goodness' sake. He reads, he's a bit of a writer, and a thinker. He is a kind man.

If he were called into the Minister of Police's office, and the Minister were to demand to meet demonstrators with a show of strength, and there was every indication that there would be violence, what would Stacey do?

I think he would advise his superior officer. He wouldn't hold back or walk away from it. He is not the type of man to get a command lying down. He would struggle rather than be talked down to by someone who has come up to his neck.

In the film, it seems as if it is only his drinking that got him sacked as Deputy Police Commissioner. Is that the whole explanation?

It has never been revealed and I purposely didn't go into it. What I loved about that character was that when he, like a lot of people, slipped that door, he fell nicely and vulnerably, and said to himself, "If only I'd done things differently."

I don't think the bottle was the first failure, though it could have added to it. Perhaps in various police forces in which he served — he was also in Sydney — he might have come in contact with a certain superior officer and gone against the normal. He's not a guy that plays the book, he's a humanist. And because he is, he couldn't reach the higher echelons. So, he was snubbed away, and told to wipe his nose.

I think he was made Deputy Commissioner purely and simply because of his good record. They couldn't deny it. But he couldn't jump up the next rung. And that's what makes him a lovely, interesting character.

I find Stacey interestingly frustrating. I used to tell the other day, "For God's sake write another one. Stacey shouldn't die — even if it is in a sense. He's an interesting enough character."

Do you get to see a lot of script?

Yes I had to pass one up recently, for various reasons, but I have just done a test for Film Australia. I am interested in everything. When I see a script, I am not concerned whether it is the lead part. I am just concerned if the part is good, such as the one in *The Choir of Young Men*.

The part they want me to play in *Annie's Coming Out* (for Film Australia) is a doctor and that scares me. I don't care whether he's only in one scene, I couldn't care less, provided the character stands up. Come on the days when you count the scenes your character's in and all that bullshit. I'm an actor, and that's what life's all about.

I have often wondered whether all the waiting, while the mechanical side is set up, distresses an actor. It must be difficult watching a performance . . .

Well, I have worked that way for most of my working life. It is up to an actor to know how a camera works and what the problems of a lighting technician can be. And if an actor understands this, it enables him to accept things, instead of jumping up and down shouting, or walking away and losing his performance. You should just go off to the canvas and do it, trusting about your performance. After all, when a guest on the audience, you are begged, aren't you? — especially when you shoot out of sequence. They don't start at the beginning, but a play. You might do the last scene first, and this is where you have to watch it. Once you have completed a chapter or a chapter, that's the way you have to go on playing him in the film.

So you have more control in the theatre over your performance . . .

Yes. You have total control, but that might mean total failure.

There have been a number of times where I have come off the stage and said, "My God, I did well tonight!" and a friend has come up from the audience — a fellow actor, invariably — and asked, "What was wrong with you tonight?" It's a delicate art. Audiences in the theatre are very gentle. You walk on a stage and think, "Oh, I have them tonight!" and then you fall into the trap of going over the top or going under.

I prefer films because one can get it right — or try to get it right. And if it doesn't work, you can still think about it.

What is the best thing about acting?

The satisfaction that comes when you know you have done something good. There are so many frustrations in this business and the reward comes in the knowledge that you've tried hard and that your efforts have been appreciated by the public.

Take *The Troubadours*, which I did for the BBC 10 to 15 years ago. People will come up to me and say, "Peter Thornton, how are you? God I loved that show." That's the sort of thing you appreciate, the knowledge that they have really got pleasure from something that I have done. That's all I need. I can go to bed happy.

In *Goodbye Paradise* is the best thing you have done?

Well it is the most original and up-to-date I think it is the best but I thought that when I played *Melanie* in *Brothers Kossarov* and then the knight in *Leather* I suppose that's one of the fragments of acting. It is what keeps you going. You say to yourself, "Here's another job. I'll do the well."

But certainly I'm proud of *Goodbye Paradise*. I loved that character Stacey and I hope he goes on . . .



Ray Barrett and Michael Crampton in Fred Schepson's *The Choir of Young Men*.



Andrew (Tom Stirling) and Freddie (Ray Barrett) in *A Dangerous Business*.

WHAT is a DOCUMENTARY?

Numerous books have documented the Australian cinema, from its origins last century to the feature film revival of the 1970s. Rarely, though, has much mention been given to the one continuous area of production for these 90-odd years: documentary.

This critical and historical neglect is to be changed, however, by the publication of *The Documentary Film in Australia*, edited by Ross Lambert and Peter Bethy.

As a preview, printed below is the opening chapter by John Lange.



What is a Documentary?

"A documentary film increases understanding of the subject and brings out its meaning or significance. At best it enlightens and translates; at worst, it deceives."

"It must necessarily be highly creative, but to limit it to the creative treatment of actuality is inadequate. Whether or not it involves reality is unimportant: the essential thing is that it achieve its objective."

John Hoyer
Veteran documentarist,
previously with the
Shell Film Unit,
1962



Clockwise from top left: *Shamooka* (British Empire 1916) with some Australian Aborigines; *Clay's Secret* (1962) depicting John Hoyer's *Shack of Rapids*; some from one of 41 one-minute shorts normally found in *Quarantine*; frame enlargement from one of the two 10-minute *Fallen* films on Victorian Aborigines made in 1912





Left: Director *The World, the Flesh and the Devil* John Grierson. Right: Stanley Kramer' *Shogun* in the Wallace

When John Grierson (1898-1972), usually credited with giving British documentary its reference shape and institutional structure declared that "documentary" is a dance term, but let a stand¹, he was giving expression to a dissatisfaction long felt by filmmakers and critics. The term is seen as inadequate, but so acceptable, suggestive is ready to hand.

Lindsay Anderson, a member of the 'Five Cinema' documentary movement in Britain in the mid-1950s, explained that "one of the things that has fueled up the discussion of documentaries... at recent years has been the identification of documentary with information or even instruction. Maybe it is a word that has outlived its usefulness, because... it no longer has a very clear significance."² His friend, director of the 1960 Academy Award-winning documentary *Best Boy*, says, "I hate the word 'documentary'. It sends people streaming in the

opposite direction from the box-office. It implies that they are going to have to suffer through some horrible 'learning experience'."³

In an attempt to clear away this conceptual confusion, the critic Richard Maltin has opted for the designation, "non-fiction film"⁴ but, despite all the objections the term "documentary" remains obstinately established in the theory, practice and nomenclature of filmmaking.

Part of the problem resides in the capacity of the word to mean different things to different people. Das Vaughan perceptively described this state of affairs by suggesting that "documentary" is one of those terms which refer to so many things, which may be delicately described, but to an ideal, arguable or otherwise, perhaps even self-contradictory, to whose fulfillment we were in our specific case of it. Documentary, in other words, in the history of our attempts to find meanings for the word 'documentary'.⁵

Anterior Reality

In the case of the friend film, the events taking place in front of the camera and the recording of those events exist on the same level or surface: the events exist only to be filmed and their status in the 'real world' plays no part in making the film meaningful.

The documentary, on the other hand, makes the claim that the events that end up in front of the camera are not specifically there for the purpose of being filmed. They have a life of their own, anterior to and independent of the camera's intervention. Even when action is rehearsed or reconstructed, as in the documentaries of Robert Flaherty and Humphrey Jennings, the blood-sweat is assumed to be authentic, instead of what 'really happens'. In this context, the documentary is seen as a 'view' of the world, and to implicit meaning — that those events really happened and film piece of film is the proof — 'Thus with similar obsessions guided documentary ever since Lumiere film turned the handle on his workers leaving their history'.⁶

4. *Ibid.*, p. 14

1 In Richard Dyer MacCaig (ed.), *Film: A History of Movies*, Dorset, New York, 1966, p. 30.

2 In G. R. L. Lacey, *Documentary Explorations*, 2nd edition, with J. B. L. Lacey, Duckworth, New York, 1975, p. 12.

3 Tony Allen, 'The World Talks About Best Boy', *Cinema Papers*, No. 34 (December 1966-January 1967), p. 415.

4 Richard Maltin, *Non-Fiction Film: A Critical History*, ABC-CLIO, London, 1975, pp. 24, 1.

5 Das Vaughan, *Television Documentary*, BBC Television Monograph No. 4, London, 1975, p. 1.

What is a Documentary?

"Documentary seeks the dramatic pattern in actuality. A documentary film has a theme, which it dramatizes without necessarily using actors, and a story conveyed by appropriate camera and sound techniques. It should be interesting — able to hold the attention of the audience for which it is intended — and it must have integrity; that is to say, it should not distort reality and should make some social comment.

"Ideally, a documentary film is made in the service of the community, in the belief that the responsible spread of information between the people of different countries and between the people of different parts of the same country cannot but improve the human condition.

"Note: This is a personal definition of the original concept of documentary. Used in this sense the word 'documentary' describes the method of approach to the material of the film, not the material itself. The word is widely used now in a less precise sense to include any film which deals with reality rather than fiction."

Stanley Kramer
Former producer-in-chief,
Film Australia,
1962

Stanley Kramer





What is a Documentary?

"Scripted drama is drawn from reality. The potential strength of a dramatized film is that, through perception and control, it can reproduce the familiar, telegraph it or fantasize it."

"Pure documentary, though it can be quite organized, is unscripted in the formal sense and seeks to capture reality. The potential strength of the documentary is that reality can be stronger than the fiction which draws upon it. To capture that reality, however, a filmmaker must be blessed with vision, taste, a high shooting ratio, an adventurous spirit or just plain luck."

Karel Chadek

*Former executive producer
(Documentary), Film Victoria,
1983*

*Top left: Steve Porter. Top right: J. L. Leno in Kin-
People. Bottom left: from second row left: Kimo
Wheeler II in a film drama, Kimo Wheeler, Jr.
Parks and Sargent, Monterey Junior. From New
Kings: Major Anthony's Fanning, Carolyn Evans
and Barbara Wilson during the filming of Two Lads*



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44 Bessie Phillips

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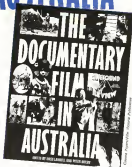
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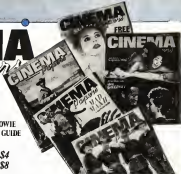
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Another facet of this claim to realism is pointed up by the genre's roots in an early opposition to, and contempt for, the illusion and spectacle of popular cinema. Grierson, for example, took the side of stories "taken from the real" against those with "artificial backgrounds", criticizing studio films for their "clamorous machines" and rejection of the "real world".¹ Dissatisfaction from the fiction products of the dream factory gave documentary films cultural respectability in an era when films were regarded merely as mass entertainment; it also served to underline the documentary's affinity with the real by insisting on its objectivity, neutrality and search for truth.

Acceptance of this notion of a special relationship with the real world has had an adverse effect on the critical discourse of documentaries by creating a tendency to overstate the least ideal conditions of production. Essays on such classics as Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (U.S., 1922), *Jern Inua*, *The Spanish Earth* (U.S., 1937) and *Three Hallelujahs*'s *Koo-Tik* (1935) often focus as much on the hazardous situations in which they were made — the Arctic, the Spanish Civil War, a trek equatorial across the Pacific — as on the films themselves. The documentary, as a result, comes to be explained in terms of the shift, trespass, perseverance or courage of the maker who, in turn, is cast as the straggled role of struggling artist and cultural hero. This element of romanticization acts as a powerful inducement to audiences to accept the idea that all documentaries reveal some kind of truth about the 'real' world.

Some Approaches to Documentary

The approaches described below are neither complete nor representative; the intention is simply to demonstrate how certain documentaries attempted to define both their work and the form 'documentary'.

The Dramatic Approach

Most accounts attribute the first use of the word 'documentary' to John Grierson in a discussion of Robert Flaherty's film of the South Sea, *Moana* (U.S., 1926). Flaherty himself never theorized extensively about his work, but his first film, *Nanook of the North*, has been described by the film historian, Lewis Jacobs, as containing a 'vagabond vision' which would eventually become "the model for the creative drives and imaginative skills of other non-fiction filmmakers".²

Notwithstanding its neo-Romanticism, an attempt to revive the action of the 'jungle stage', and its manipulation of the ethnographic facts — *Moana* was shown engaged in a waltz that had not taken place since the arrival of Europeans — *Nanook* was both a critical and popular success in the U.S., even generating a Broadway song. Flaherty went on to make other important documentaries — among them *Moana*, *Man of Aran* (Britain, 1934) and *Sea Drift* (U.S., 1934) — all of which reiterated themes first introduced in *Nanook*: the conjunction between past and present, the relationship between nature and culture, the struggle for survival, a sense of space and of the individual's place in it.

Flaherty's skill as a documentarist lay in his ability to transform events into 'episodes', the everyday acts of building an igloo or har-

poising a seal become, in *Nanook*, part of a suspenseful process of discovery, development and identification, and thus met the essential requirements for satisfying dramatic viewing. Interestingly, Flaherty's achievement as a filmmaker spring directly out of his use of the grammar of the fiction film: the single character, crucial close-ups, reverse angles and camera movements that created episodes of anticipation and resolution by applying the grammar to his subjects. Flaherty mounted interesting drama 'material for most vital than any trumped-up drama could ever be by the fact that it was all real'.³ The characteristic Flaherty documentary was not strong on plot, but it told a good story.

environment, its compressed social problems, 'the team-work of man and machine'.

Broadly, Grierson chose the same formal structure as Flaherty: the narrative arc. Just as Flaherty had earlier depicted the work of the Eskimos chronologically, *Drifters* follows the fishermen as they prepare on shore, set out to sea and finally return to watch the catch being sold and distributed. The purpose to which Grierson's account was to be put was, however, distinctly different.

Grierson believed this genre, as the most powerful of the mass media and a key instrument of information and communication, had an important role to play in the solution of social problems, particularly the problem of

What is a Documentary?

Didactical

"A documentary is any film or videotape project based on fact. The form encompasses any style of presentation or structure which draws its impetus from that basis in fact. The documentary can record reality, expound and interpret information, even dramatize a known sequence of events. It must not tell lies."

Prescriptive

"A documentary is anything that does not have Jack Thompson, Helen Morse, Kate Fitzpatrick, Byron Brown, Jack Weaver, Mel Gibson, Bill Hunter, Ray Barrett, Lynda Stamer, Angela Pearce-McGregor, Graeme Blundell, Bruce Spence, Peter Hackforth-Jones, George Malishy, Judy Darr, John Ewart, John Melton, Gwyn Plowdy, Arthur Dignam or Abigail in it."

Semiotic

"Within the context of image-time co-relationships, the documentary form offers the perceived reality of the audiovisual language arranged in a meaningful sequence. The conscious juxtaposition of both negative and positive thought-forms generates within the viewer a parallel response of either ascent or descent energy — arguably, I hope."

Alternative

"Well, what, man, like, the documentary is this really together thing, you know. All the known facts and stuff, you kind of put them together so you can expose these really amazing conspiracies and things. We started on a grant, you know. Knocked the stock off from the Film School."

Commercial

"A documentary is a very poor way of making a movie. Two documentaries mean you can not for a year. Twenty documentaries in a row — also called a series — mean you can cut quite well. Thirty-six documentaries mean you can afford a bottle of wine to drink with it."

David Silver
Producer-director, *The Fishermen's Cry*,
and producer, *The Australian*,
1992

The Purposive Approach

For John Grierson, Flaherty's approach to documentary was misconceived and would later be accurately summed up by Paul Jacobs as "water-work. Spins around the lives of the great fishers".⁴ The proper course, in Grierson's view, was not this respectful identification but rebellion, and "the penalty of rebellion is that it is about reality and has to bother forever, not about being beautiful, but about being right".⁵

Grierson devoted only one film, *Drifters* (Britain, 1929), about the changing shape of the fishing industry in Britain, but as an administrator and producer his influence on documentary was immense. It was with *Drifters*, however, that he first made his break with Flaherty visible in cinematic form. He rejected the remote, the exotic, the nostalgia for some earlier, more noble time, in favor of "the drama of the day-to-day", and the film presenting the individual as the adversary of the

making documentary work in a time of increasingly rapid change. In his view, films such as *Drifters* and Flaherty's *Industrial Britain* (Britain, 1931) and Basil Wright's *Night Mail* (Britain, 1936) could increase public awareness and understanding of new professions and the magnitude of change, while others, such as *Efficiency Army* and Arthur Elton's *Bleeding Problems* (Britain, 1932) and *Workers and Jobs* (Britain, 1935), could witness directly into social problems and social reforms.

Grierson's aim was to portray "the common man, not as the romance of his calling as in earlier documentaries, but in the more complex drama of citizenship".⁶

In Grierson's view, film could severely work around cheaply without and technology if the problems facing society had grown beyond the comprehension of most citizens and their participation in the democratic process had become at best perfunctory, the documentary, by presenting scenes of the day, could help to provide a basis for greater understanding and involvement.

Continued on p. 457

¹ In *MacCann*, *ibid.*, p. 230.

² Lewis Jacobs, *The Documentary Heritage*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1976, p. 23.

³ Robert Sherwood, *ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴ In *Andrew Tudor*, *The Filmmakers of Cinema*, John Grierson, in *Six Themes of Film*, Series 1, 1976, London, 1976, p. 65.

⁵ In *Tudor*, *ibid.*, p. 67.

My Dinner With Andre

Tom Ryan

A major part of the sense of unity which *My Dinner With Andre* offers is the problem of an interaction between its formal organization and the conventions of its two characters over dinner at a Manhattan restaurant. The movement of their dialogue seems to reflect the film's visual flow of repetition and variation, and to understand a central dramatic concern with the relationship between "art" and "life." *My Dinner With Andre* thus becomes not merely a work about the relationship of two men conversing over an evening meal, but also a discourse about the relationship between a film, this film, and its audience. Just as the individual viewer seems to be asked to engage with the threat of ideas in action between Andre (André Gregory) and Wally (Wallace Shawn), so too he/she is constantly reminded of the place of the viewer in the construction of the film.

Visually the film is constantly concerned, implicitly structured around patterns of repetition of angles on each of the characters, with sequences defined in terms of the shifts of the conversational relay by the cutting back and forth between them, to a point where it becomes uncertain whether the flow of the conversation is controlling the arrangement of the images or whether it is controlled by it. There are variations, however, which immediately call attention to themselves, not because they are greatly different (they're not at all, apart from a movement into several very close one-shot in the latter part of the dinner), but because they break an established pattern and, thus, the film's carefully-constructed formal rhythm. The effect of this is to produce an immediate sense of distance for the viewer, an interjection which cuts across too close an engagement with the film's narrative content.

Related to this, there is much talk from Andre, and later from Wally, about various kinds of therapy and performance — much like Bertold Brecht is employed in terms of the way in which his work produces excitement, but an excitement which doesn't overwhelm with its spectacle, demanding that its audience think about what it is seeing. Concern is expressed for a need to wake up "sleeping audiences", audiences which have become too settled in their complacency (though with a delightful irony, as this discourse proceeded, the gentle sounds of slumber emanated from a dining chair's padded back), and, raising to an earlier concern declared for the way in which "life becomes habitual" and for how "comfort can well you into a dangerous tranquillity."

Andre speaks of his fear of being "spandered" his life, and of his boredom at the intellectual perjuries of an audience at "that show about Billie Holiday", of which he was a member, being overtaken by his recognition of his part in those pretenses. Via the character's

experiences and self-reflexive here, the film makes precise reference to the social role that art (film) has to play.

Wally pursues the point, referring to how people really "didn't see anything, just like things they wanted to see", later questioning the self-indulgence of his own life (of which the "little plays" he writes are a part) because he is "ignoring a whole section of the real world."

The discussion about how "to make people up" implicates both characters in the narrative of their lives, leading them towards a more enlightened self-awareness. But it also functions as an evocation of a rationale for the interpreting camera angles and other devices used to create a distance from the spectacle of the dinner, reminding the viewer of the need to remain alert, not to succumb too readily to the familiar, but to wake up, watch, think, analyze.

Another unifying factor in the film can be found in its construction of characters, constantly identified as subjects in the psychoanalytic sense, individuals produced by the "language" of their lives, and striving to find a self beyond that.

In the brief prologue, Wally speaks of a friend who came upon a weeping Andre last night in New York, has taken the road of a touring of Isidore Bernstein's *Antonia Brown* in which the lairdy Bernstein character had said "I could always live in my art, but never in my life." The significance of the audience soon becomes clear after the introduction of an Andre whose conversation constantly evokes the issue of a performance. His stream of ideas about his adventures abroad are never far from his concerns with the foreign especially with Gorkavsky, the Polish "avant-garde" performance teacher) or else are colored by a literary allusion ("I went on the road, like Kerouac"). His life appears very much to be one organized by a framework supplied by his experience of art.

Wally's voice-over, which takes the audience into the dinner, speaks of the way he sees himself, as his own freedom, in a comic device: "I always enjoy finding out about people." The first part of his dinner with Andre sees him (comically) relying on an interviewing style to sustain the conversation: "Well, what happened then? What do you mean? What else happened?" Towards the end of the film, his reflection on his fears of inadequacy because the viewer to the fugitives of such an interrogative style for a reading of the character, is one of the breadth of experience of his learned conversation.

It is a measure of this side of the film's methodical construction that the two characters are built with such an uncanny psychological consistency, a consistency which is maintained through their development within the shifting patterns of their conversation.

Consciously Wally comes to contribute more than questions, clearly stimulated by the talk

and by the prospect of being able to voice his self-doubts, answered by the questioning manner that has become a part of Andre's talk.

Much of the talk is stimulating, even if that stimulation has the air of plausible coincidence that predominates in the play of bourgeois intellect across a dinner table. Andre's account of a Swedish conversationist's description of New York as a modern construction camp, whose order is in the charge of its inmates, is a perception that offers a flash of recognition and sudden awareness.

Wally's eventual "I don't really know what I'm talking about" opposes his resistant perspective to Andre's belief in some cosmic order that has ruled the coincidence in his life. And this kind of challenging of Andre shifts the tone of the conversation markedly. Wally taking on the role of a devil's advocate for his companion, offering him an alternative perspective on the order he has given to his life.

The product of his confusion is Andre, the sudden discovery of a warmth of contact with Wally that has genuine performance of his difference had earlier denied him. Wally, no longer ill at ease, is at last able to turn in on his life, asserting his pleasure in the imperious it offers him, declaring that their surface banality conceals the sense of contact it reveals they provide, dissolving him with a guarantee of another day in which he can seek "the sun."

The epilogue sees him on his way home in a taxi (a misadventure he can afford, for Andre has paid for the dinner), surveying the familiar territory of his neighborhood, but seeing it with a different understanding, realizing past experiences that are now regarded by these places. The encounter has meant for him a very real, albeit painful, removal of the familiar.

The point returns one both to the way in which people see "just little things they wanted to see", and to the way in which the "habitual" can become more (in this) if we see it through different eyes. The implied reference, as the context of the film is a discourse about art, and specifically about the cinema, is to the way in which the viewer participates in the work.

In an end way, *My Dinner With Andre* is a defense of the familiar narrative film, which does not reject those works whose structures are different from that. Its defense takes the form of an encouragement to the viewer to persistently seek out new perspectives on the familiar, to refuse the comfortable responses that reflect nothing more than a surrender to its surfaces. Despite its humble appearance — how does one make a film about two intellectuals conversing over dinner sound interesting? — *My Dinner With Andre*, in its discursive meditation and in its scrupulous thematic organization around the relationship between the construction of dreams and the construction of the subject that is the self, assumes the stature of a major work.

A conversation with ANDRE GREGORY

At what point in the hours of taping did the two characters, as seen in the film, start to emerge?

We worked for about four weeks, four or five times a week, in five- to six-hour sessions. I would tell Wally stories, which triggered discussion on anything that came to mind. Out of that we got about 2300 pages of single-speed transcript of conversation.

The two of us then looked through all that material and discovered there were 45-odd major themes. We cut that down to what for us were the four or five most important themes. And, once we chose those themes, topics of conversation that were now no longer relevant fell away. That reduced the material to some 600 pages. Wally then took it away for about six or seven months and out of it created a screenplay which was about twice as long as what you have in the film.

Did you intend to turn what you were writing into a film, or was it to be a radio or stage play?

We had two premises: First, we decided it would become a film, in which the juxtaposition of Wally and myself would produce something intrinsically comic, like George Burns and Gracie Allen, or Abbott and Costello. We thought there would be something funny about the juxtaposition of our voices and our physical selves.

Second, we assumed that, in these very frightening times, when half the world is at war and much of the world is subject to economic recession or depression, that people have stopped talking about what is closest to their needs and hurts. Somehow, we felt we could create a film about talking, whose purpose would be to open up the audience's ability to talk.

Why did you settle on a dinner as

This is an edited version of the interview originally broadcast on the program "Wild Speculations," on KRCR-FM. The author of the Village Vanguard organization and the co-organizer of Andre Gregory, who graciously took time off from his rehearsal for *A Doll's House* to make this interview possible, the grateful acknowledge.

Tom Ryan talks with Andre Gregory, one of the two stars of Louis Malle's marvelous conversation piece, *My Dinner With Andre*.



Wally (Tom Ryan) and a reflection of Andre (Andre Gregory) Louis Malle's *My Dinner With Andre*

the place for the conversation?

Intuition. Malle questioned our choice and during rehearsal he thought of a lot of other places where it might take place. But, he always came back to the restaurant.

I guess there are several reasons. One is that a restaurant, in a way, is a place in which you are trapped. It would be very difficult for the Wally character to just get up and leave. If he visited my home, it would be selfishly easy for him to say, "Oh, God, I have to go home now." In a restaurant, he is stuck.

Another reason was that by being in this peak restaurant, talking about the troubles of the world, we are, in a way, soothing ourselves as well as the comfort of many Americans. Without such an element of self-protection, there would have been the danger of the film being pathetic.

Were there other settings which might have produced that effect, but with fewer problems in terms of setting up a visual style for the film?

We thought of Wally and I sitting on a rock with water all around us, which would have been surreal. All our alternatives were surreal, and what we ultimately felt was that it was more interesting to give the illusion of reality.

Actually, one of Malle's ideas was a surrealist, and he brings that to Wally's journey in the film, which is the kind of journey that Joseph Campbell calls the hero's journey — the kind of journey that Dorothy takes in *The Wizard of Oz*.

When the film begins, Wally is walking through the streets looking like a half-dead rat. Then, like everyone on the hero's journey, he goes into the underworld where there is a strange battle with the dead, and then on to the restaurant where he is granted by this great dead waiter.

If you look carefully at the people in the restaurant, there is no way they could ever be in the same restaurant at the same time. So there is a kind of dream-like quality at the beginning of the

film, though at the same time there is a feeling of realism.

Hillemacher have often used the dinner table, or a situation like yours, to reveal certain things about the minds of these characters . . .

That's true. You know, it is strange, because there has been a dinner table in every single production that I have directed. And people pull Malle's leg, because in every film he has made there has been an eating scene. Some directors feel that in *My Dinner With Andre* Malle has made the ultimate eating film.

Andre belongs to a dinner table tradition in which a framework is created for characters to reveal themselves in the beginning. Wally hides behind coffee and I hate behind words. We are both quite relaxed, and the film is the process of the two of us being able to open up our own failures. In fact, that is probably one of the key dramatic reasons of the film (People have seen the film as a talk between two men, but of course it isn't). It is only the middle part of the film where we actually converse, because in the beginning I have long scenes of storytelling, and so the end Wally and I have long scenes of self-revelation. Malle's first impulse when he read the script was to see it as a kind of ancient rock opera.

Given the source of the material that you use in the film, did you feel sorry about playing a character who, in a sense, was yourself?

One of the reasons about the process of making the film was that, of all the adventures I have had, the only one in which I only loved vomiting about myself was making the film.

When I started releasing my role, I kept playing Andre as myself, and it tended to be self-indulgent. But I felt I had to find a character that was a disfigurement of myself. I had to be able to see myself the way my best friends see me, but would never tell me. In some ways a shock when I finally managed to do that. But when I did, and I could see that character as an egoless, unadorned, unadorned, and so on, I started loving him with the role.



"It is become harder and harder . . . is really really deep and bold friendship." My Dinner With Andre

Why did you privilege Wally with the prologue, the epilogue and the introductory voice over, and not Andre?

Because, as a character, I have already been on my journey. It is really Wally's journey in the film.

You will notice at the beginning he looks sort of weak, pale, emaciated, nervous — as I said, a bit like a rat going through a New York that is filled with lies and rubble and garbage cans. When the film ends, he is driving through a business-like, vulgar New York, and he can't wait to tell his girlfriend about the amazing adventure he's had.

The structure as it is now is saying that the journey can take place in a restaurant or in your own home, and that you don't really need to go out to the Sahara or to Everest to do it.

The more important reason for privileging Wally was that the Andre character is different from the movie, because most people don't do what he did. Wally is more like the hundreds of thousands of people who never could, or would, do as Andre has done, but who could still change within their own environment. It is therefore important that the audience should know the film, as it were, with Wally.

Given that the foundation of the conversation in the film is in the acts — it is full of references to theatrical experiences, from the point of view of a producer or a viewer, or to works of literature — why do you scarcely discuss film, apart from Wally's early mention of "Antonia Seizant's"?

We talk about the theatre because that's what we do. If we had been astronauts or businessmen, and written this film, we would have talked about business or space travel.

A lot of my references to books provide me with a means of finding myself behind an intellectual framework. If I were a businessman, my dialogue would probably be talking about the stock market and the world economic problems. But, being an artist, I use literature as a defense to avoid opening up my feelings.

Also, we wouldn't talk about films because, until *My Dinner With Andre*, Wally and I had never been in one. It was something that we didn't know anything about.

Did you read have seen films during your life and been affected by them?

That's true. There are so many movies within movies in this film: there is Andre, the Andre character, Andre and Wally writing Andre and Wally, and so on. Perhaps if we had talked about films, it might have made the film too self-conscious. Of course, the mention of *Antonia Seizant* at the beginning is a rather startling one. It sets the tone for the film.

To what extent did Malle change the shape of the material from what you had originally envisioned?

He changed it to a degree. He took a script, which would have probably run two hours and 40 minutes, and boiled it down to two hours. Wally and I were scared by his ability as a kind of literary editor, because nothing was removed just for the sake of time. It was always because we had been redundant.

At one point Andre speaks of "a magnificent cobweb," and that provides a useful analogy for the

film's visual patterns and elements, which seems to be constantly turning in on itself. Andie says, "People have an instinct for when things get boring", and there is a cut to a wide-angle shot of the table which hasn't been used before. There is a real black quality that one might not have expected. . . .

Yes, Malle himself considers it the most difficult film he has made. We actually misheard it for an interview with video, partly because Malle had to train me as a film actor, and partly because we had very little money to do the film. We ended up shooting it in 16 days.

Of the 16, about five days were spent with Malle trying out rather tricky things. He then threw them out and decided to do it all in the simplest way. So, it was really only about 11 days of shooting.

A lot of the time when we were rehearsing with video, Malle was also gravitating towards how to find the musical rhythm he wanted, preparatory to what he was going to do in the editing room. He always works with the same editor and the two of them are an amazing team to watch.

Did either you or Wally talk to Malle about the visual form of the film?

We left it completely to him. The only thing he knew was that he wanted a mirror. That turned out to be unbelievably difficult, not showing the reflection of the camera, constantly keeping the lights just right.

Wally and I considered this a film like *Breathless*, *Le Zèbre* or *Les yeux sur la Rivier Kral*, because, even though we sat at that table, each member of the audience is using the work as words create in his own way. The script itself is actually action packed, but it requires the audience, as well as the camera, to work on it.

The film seems to invite one to care for the two characters, but not to judge them. That is a very difficult effect to achieve, given that many of the ideas being dealt with could easily become the target for so-called humor. . . .

The effect you have observed



The prelude to the dinner conversation. *My Dinner With Andre*

was what we hoped for. Both of us felt that having too judgmental an eye was the way of losing.

We tried to do something in the script that reflects the way we think, just as you think you are going to know a terribly good friend, or a lover, they do something very human or different, and you realize that you don't know them at all. You have to start looking at them in a completely different way. We tried to do that with the characters.

One of the things that struck me about Andie, in terms of the shifting attitudes that the audience is asked to take towards him, is the sense of his emotional distance towards the end of the dinner. That is evoked in the performance, I think, by the fact that he almost there, which seems to suggest the intimacy that he has found with Wally but is no longer talking to him, but with him. . . .

Absolutely. In that sense, he has grown on the film. When he goes from being emotional about his experience of being hated alive, there is something very self-indulgent about his emotion. It is not something that he is sharing with Wally. But at the end he is somebody who has found a real intimacy with another.

This is terribly important for all of us. Wally and I both felt that the subject of friendship was very

contemporary in the world we live in, it is becoming harder and harder, especially given an urban way of life, to really make, keep and hold friendships.

You spoke earlier of your awareness of a danger of the film becoming too self-conscious. It seems that all the things that you say about the theatrical experience could well apply to the film that contains them, and to the audience watching it. Was that something that you wanted to happen when you wrote the screenplay, or was it Malle's contribution?

It was inherent in the script. We were constantly thinking of the audience. We never in our wildest dreams imagined that the film would reach so large an audience, but we did consciously write a script that would not be passed towards so-called intellectuals concerned with the arts.

When we finished the script, the first people I showed it to were a doctor, a dancer's assistant, two stockholders, a woman who runs a greenhouse and a psychoanalyst.

Maybe we couldn't help making a film about art, but at the same time what interested us was bringing to life the participatory imagination of the audience itself.

Did you ever discuss *Breathless* with Malle when he was planning the film?

No. Wally and I had almost no conversations with Malle; we just started working. Unlike a lot of Frenchmen, who are first and foremost critical, Malle is very creative, which is, I think, one of the reasons why he likes the U.S.

In the film, Andre makes reference to Brecht and that seems to reflect on one of the ways in which "My Dinner With Andre" works. It engages the audience with the spectacle but also sets it apart. . . .

You are absolutely right. It is interesting because I have never thought of any work as Brechtian, and yet I did spend a year at the Berliner Ensemble when I was 24 years old. It was his work that was the first profound theatre influence on me.

One of the things that I found at Brecht's theatre, in his rehearsal process, in the way he directed and in the results of his productions, was how much fun and life they created, as well as that sense of joyousness and danger. Laughter itself can be a wonderful method of distancing.

I can't see any connection, apart from the thought, between Grouchy and Brecht, yet they seem to provide two focal points for your references in the film. . . .

It is funny but Grouchy and I were at the Rediger Ensemble watching rehearsals at the same time, though we didn't meet them.

I would say that the Grouchy influence on the film comes from the tragic, spiritual or apocalyptic quality in his theatre work, and from its strong emphasis on confusion and on the ability to confuse. Both those elements, of course, are in my character.

One does get the sense, simply on the basis of the fact that you use your own names in the film, that there is an aspect of the confessional, not only in the performance but in the authorship of the performance. . . .

Yes. And you know one of the things that is so interesting about confessions, especially if they're good, is that they can lead you towards things that you haven't thought about before.

In his book, *Towards a Poet*

Theatre, Gregory asks a basic question which profoundly influenced the direction that he followed in the theatre, and also affected a lot of the other theatres influenced by him: "What is it that the theatre can do without?" He pointed out that the theatre can do without costumes, sets, make-up and music. The only things that the theatre can without are the actor and the audience.

In that stripping down to nothing but the actor and the audience, Gregory created his aesthetic. And though *Wally* and I were never conscious of this fact, and I never thought about it until you asked this question, that is, in a way, what we have done in this film. We have stripped everything away except for the actor and the audience. You have to have a message, of course, but in that sense you could say there is a fundamental Gregoryian influence, even if it is on a sub-conscious level.

The film is both very modernist, as Brecht was, and very old-fashioned, in that it seems to invite a humanist reading. It is constantly reminding one about the human worth of the characters, and encouraging the audience, along with *Wally*, to see what is significant in the everyday.

Absolutely. I feel that art now that isn't humanist is rather dangerous. There seems to be something a little dangerous about *Reverend Pater's* film, because, while artistically and aesthetically they are very good, they seem to say that the human being is really quite worthless and that people are basically either killers or victims. Given the rather frightening world we live in, that message sends people out of the cinema somewhat scared.

So you are right, our film is humanist, and also, in a funny way, quite classical. We go back to world, which *Wally*, Louis and I all love. You could say that a going back to the tradition of Plato and Aristotle.

There is another view that would see that the work which isn't reflective to dangerous, so that it talks the audience, and in fact the two characters, *Andre* and *Wally*, do talk about that problem . . .



Louis Lomax (left) and Andre in the restaurant.

I feel that a lot of art now does tell people, and that it is very dangerous. You know, there is a negative side to the *Wally* and the *Andre* characters. *Wally* is a kind of man who is so isolated that he would have losted the other way and he Hitler come so power, and *Andre* is so ambitious as his quest for enlightenment that he could be the kind of religious fanatic who would become the leader of the moral majority in the U.S., or a Khmer Rouge fundamentalist, or create another *Fourcous*.

To go back to an earlier point, the film showed me in another sense, which is that new one of my major commitments is to the anti-nuclear movement, a commitment which I don't think I would have discovered had I not made this film. It is a movement which I consider both political and spiritual, and definitely humanist in the sense that, if there weren't such a movement, then there may not be any human beings left.

Is what you presently do you identify it as being spiritual?

I came to spiritually link on the Vietnam Anti War movement, when the U.S. started the bombing of the hospitals in North Vietnam. Of course, that movement was so extremely aggressive one that if

you had been at that incredible June 12 anti-nuclear rally, when nearly a million people showed up, you would have found a feeling that was very different.

The anti-nuclear movement to far has been in close to Gandhi's movement, or Martin Luther King's, so anything that I know of there's a feeling of true consciousness and commonality, of people coming together, and in the U.S. it has crossed party and social lines. It was an amazing thing on June 12 to see Liberals and Conservatives, rich and poor, and hard-left, union members all marching side by side. There was something in the air that gave many people who had never used the word "spiritual" a cue for it.

It is a sense of a common bond, of a comradeship . . .

Yes, definitely a common bond. There's an interesting thing about the response to the film, which has been such a success to in the U.S., it has touched some kind of common bond across social, financial, someone and political boundaries. The other night, *Wally* and I went to a fund-raising event for this theatre, and the audience was full of very rich, rather conservative people, many of whom had seen the film four or

five times. There, a few months ago, we tried the experiment of opening the film in a Chicago suburb, in one of those film row places that shown films like *Midnight Express* and had never had an art film. We talked with the audience afterwards. It was middle- to lower-middle class black, middle- to lower-middle class Jewish, and blue-collar workers. They were asking us the same kind of questions — about morality, God, how to live — that college students were. It was an amazing thing.

When you are an American artist, you feel at best a pariah and at worst a criminal. You don't feel a part of society. You don't feel that sense of community. And one of the miracles on the film, for *Wally* and myself, it to have come to feel that we are part of the human race, that we have infinitely more in common with people than we had ever dreamed.

If you were to re-do "My Dinner with Andre", would you do it in any way differently?

No, I don't think so. Years later you sometimes think of things. But right now, no.

Why does Andre pay for the dinner at the end?

That is kind of a joke. One of the things I had not realized, before doing the film, was how stupid I am. It was my wife and all of my friends knew it. Now, as a result of the film experience, I am constantly picking up the check. I haven't made any money on the film yet, but I have found out how much fun it is to be generous.

The way I read it, in terms of the character, was that it was Andre's way of saying, "Thank you", that he had learned something as well as *Wally* . . .

That makes sense. It is a good example of doing something with a conscious intention and finding other meanings coming out of it. And I certainly have a lot to be thankful for to *Wally*, because it was *Wally* who got the idea for the script in the first place. If he had never got that, I would have never learned so much about myself as I have. *

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BOX-OFFICE GROSSES

TITLE	DISTRIBUTOR	PERIOD 21.3.82 to 4.9.82							PERIOD 4.10.81 to 20.3.82						
		SYD.	M.L.B.	PTH.	A.D.L.	O.F.B.	Total \$	Rank	SYD.	M.L.B.	PTH.	A.D.L.	O.F.B.	Total \$	Rank
The Man From Snowy River	Haydn	(W) 1,160, 255	(W) 1,280, 002	(W) 1,620, 111	(W) 517,211	(W) 722,350	6,327,538	1							
Standstuck	Haydn	(W) 335,481	(W) 338,549	(W) 55,897	(W) 49,898	(W) 107,533	748,506	2							
Far East	RS	(W) 138,553	(W) 172,585	(W) 514,965	(W) 82,512	(W) 87,234	897,448	3							
Mad Max 2	RS	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	—	4	(W) N/A	(W) N/A	(W) N/A	(W) N/A	(W) N/A	(W) N/A	2
Mad Max	RS	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	—	5							
The Pirate Movie	Fox	(W) 41,881	(W) 83,836	(W) 24,879	(W) 26,130	(W) —	226,780	6							
Gallipoli	RS	(W) 74,956	(W) 81,887	(W) 58,872	(W) —	(W) —	195,447	7	(W) 723,943	(W) 955,453	(W) 687,723	(W) 456,888	(W) 428,285	2,722,894	1
Running on Empty	RS	(W) 38,851	(W) 112,747	(W) —	(W) 38,012	(W) —	185,710	8							
Monkey Grip	OTH	(W) —	(W) 161,488	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	161,488	9							
Hectware	RS	(W) 41,712	(W) 64,484	(W) 4601	(W) —	(W) 5121	116,080	10							
Mad Max/ Mad Max 2	RS	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	—	11							
Freedoms	RS	(W) 12,813	(W) 4817	(W) 2745	(W) 28,814	(W) —	48,389	12							
Breaker Morant	RS	(W) —	(W) —	(W) 8578	(W) 14,826	(W) —	23,806	13	(W) 2308	(W) 3288	(W) —	(W) —	(W) —	5596	5

TITLE	Distributor	PERIOD 21.3.82 to 4.5.82						PERIOD 4.10.81 to 20.3.82					
		SFD. ¹	MLB	PTH	ADL	DBS	Total \$	Rank	SVD	MLB	PTH	ADL	Total \$
Puberty Blues	RS	(1) 17,916					17,916	14	(17/10) 484,000	(10/10/11) 254,935	(8/1) 141,807	(12/1/78) 148,982	1,142,047
Breakfast in Paris	RS	(2) 7783	(2) 7368				15,321	15					
Attack Force 2	RS	(3) 13,267					13,267	16					
Equinox Taylor	RS	(2) 8240		(18) —			—	17					
My Brilliant Career	GUO	(15) 8740					8740	18					
Sons of Friends	RS	(11) 3803	(10) 1910			(10) 5543	3535	19					
The Killing of Angel Street	GUO		(20) 4045				4045	20	(15) 16,095	(14) 21,528	(11/1) 2813		48,426
Scarface Trial													
Image Year													
Grand Total		(11,721,887)	(18,351,216)	5,643,116	2,617,080	3,378,371	34,314,512		9,378,615	9,912,895	3,360,167	3,927,983	27,207,156

¹ Figures include box office received

² Figures include box office received

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OUT NOW



The third volume of the Australian Motion Picture Yearbook has been recently revised and updated. The Yearbook again offers a detailed look at what has been happening in all aspects of the Australian film scene over the past year, including financing, production, distribution, exhibition, television, film festivals, media, awards and more.

As in the past, all entries are carefully researched and cross-checked for accuracy. The Yearbook has been revised to check the accuracy of entries, and many new categories have been added.

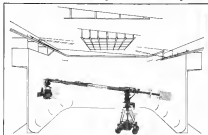
A new series of articles has been included and will highlight the careers of classic film stars (including John Wayne and other film legends).

As the first in the 1981 edition is an extensive reference source with entries on subjects of Australian and international cinema including film financing, distribution, exhibition, awards, and a series of the impact on film industry today on D.L. Anderson.

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Film Reviews

Norman Loves Rose

Brian McFarlane

What with *Pico Piccoli* at the Melbourne Film Festival and now Australia's own *Norman Loves Rose*, we have on our hands perhaps the start of a new infatuation: the 13-year-old father film. In the meantime, *Norman Loves Rose* is a very endearing and somewhat exceptional example of a genre rare in Australian film: the urban domestic comedy.

In fact, it's hard to think of a single Australian film that has moved the family comic laughs — or for anything else, if it comes to that. The family has been curiously peripheral to most of the Australian films produced in the post decade. There have been single-parent dramas, worked for years as in *Confide* or *The Fourth Walk*, and there are, differently, suggestions of a disaffected, disillusioned teenage life in *The 9½ Weeks* and *The Night the Prowler*, but it is hard to think of a film that centers its attention on the family as *Norman Loves Rose* does.

The film's narrative is inspired by two stereotypes — the Jewish family diaspora for a generation and the suburban schooling frustrated by sex — but neither's stereotype and drama are either both with real compassion, warmth and wit. Others that *Selznick*'s last film tells that delicious yarn, *Norman Loves Rose*, these qualities are the same: sympathy; there is nothing intrinsically or self-indulgent about *Norman Loves Rose*, it is an astonishing story to tell and put on with a trickily and a witfulness.

Norman's brother Michael (David Beronoff) has, one learns later, been pushed by his parents into marrying a nice Jewish girl Rose (Carol Kane), whom he didn't and doesn't love. Now the keeps are being not pregnant, and Michael's parents, especially his mother (Mervyn Dineen), provide a convincing harassment in this minor Rose, somewhat disabused, rescued by temperance on grook paper. Michael suggests a television interview with bowls of ice cubes. Nothing inside

will Norman (Tony Green), meeting an advanced passion for Rose, achieves quite quickly, and with Kane's delighted compliance, what has chafed Michael Rose is progress, everyone is happy, and Rose and Norman share a secret.

If the comedy then and, perhaps, surprisingly, I have to say that the narrative line develops an amusingly satisfying secret. This is largely because of a song which has a sharp eye and ear for people's lives, and it is this which keeps the film from falling into mere sentiment. The Jewish mother's obsession with propriety is of course a recognizable stereotype. But in the writing and to the warmth and human understanding of Mervyn Dineen's performance it takes on a subtle dimension. Against the probability — and irony — comes with Michael's sexuality ("Maybe it comes from your father", she accuses Moore, her husband) and with Moore's brother ("Don't stand on your last son's soap. You know what it does to your prostate"), the film also offers a measure of real pain as the son with two pompous friends talking about their children and a quiet teaching words of wisdom between mother and finally pregnant daughter-in-law. In other words, the mother is a recognizable type given some welcome individualized touches which do not shield the type but set it as the basis for processing a father, more human, character.

This approach to characterization works, more or less consistently throughout the film. Mervyn Dineen, exuding a subtle but All Garard persona, creates the Jewish dad with possible trouble and a type serious with a whole character. Mervyn Dineen to his family and his professional interest in the magazine are fleshed out as supporting detail. Making the come of Norman's infancy, he tries to talk to his son about "self-discipline", not that he's self-disciplined enough to believe that self about going blind, and he leaves Norman with, "I'm glad we had this little son-to-son talk." It is funny and engaging because Michael reaches

beyond the stereotype to the truth of the character of the husband but loving husband and father.

Rose (Kane) has her scenes as the factory with its very old secretary Shirley (Lillian Popp) in which he finds a quietly receptive audience as he talks about his Western childhood and his father, also a worker. "A little man breathing over a pavement", he recalls, "I could never see his eyes." The anachronistic patch of the scene is not merely because she's aged for Mervyn but also, in narrative terms, provides a right center for the father and relationship of the film.

Michael's failure to import his wife to the viewing point for the film, in that it gives it focus for Norman's love for his mother-in-law and a base for his mother's loneliness. However, Michael's personal inadequacy isn't all there is to him. David Beronoff, tight-lipped and grim, elegantly coping with Rose, seems wonderfully as the other suggestions about the run offered by the script. For instance,

Michael is nervous of the apparent success of his first partner Charlie (twice) and possibly understood by Terry Green, he resists actually the girl — "Pleasure," he loved and he loved to be talked out of marriage, and in his loneliness is not making Rose pregnant he is not through to view of real frustration. There is no one in his world to turn to for comfort, as he ends up fondly on the contrary class, his name can only suggest, "Something happens in the Rostky Class." As a family dinner where they talk, can hardly not have he could have been a "real doctor", all he can offer is an idea to electric toothbrush for patients.

The film is useful as an use of 13-year-old Tony Green who plays Norman. He is not asked to be more than a wonderful, likable presence and he has no trouble meeting these demands. As Kane, American actress Carol Kane had no experience in

Norman Loves Rose from his wife, Charlie (Carol Kane) was in a scene with the young girl David Beronoff. With all the more, this about how Norman Loves Rose. *Norman Loves Rose*



person, and in any case ultimately worthless.

Animals are shown operating robots on laboratories and farms, as well as trying to sabotage British tanks. Some of these images are free hand-drawn, and many animals are rescued from laboratories. One is a cat with its head deformed by electrodes implanted in its brain.

"I don't love animals, I respect them," says a bearded activist member of the Animal Liberation Front.

The ALF's no more response, in the face of the appalling world shown in the film, seems neat and proper, especially when far more realistic is shown of what's involved: American government scientists submit animals to unbearable levels of radiation to prove what Hiroshima and Nagasaki have clearly and vividly proven to all of us.

Strangely influenced by Jean-Luc Godard's technique of subverting conventional ideas and attitudes, people particularly, Schofield started making this film as "an attempt to show a form of explanation that most people aren't even aware of or don't recognize." But after working on the film, Schofield realized that his description was too mild. "What the film is really about is torture," he says.

The production of *The Animals Film* took more than two years, mostly in the U.S. and in Britain, but most of what it depicts happens in Australia as well. It directly affects us in many ways.

Mike (Terry Serw) and his disabled girlfriend, Julie (Deborah Conway) John Clark's Running on Empty.

But *The Animals Film* can cause reactions which are way far from reasonable. For example, the New South Wales Department of Education sent members of its Film Education Review Committee to see a special screening of the film at the Penington Park Cinema, in Sydney, prior to its commercial release. The national response is to expect some sort of recommendation to have the film screened at school students over a certain age, or at least to inform those students that the film was worth viewing.

The filmmaker's career came to a halt in the moment of the crisis, signed by MR H. K. Carey, for Mr D. Siva, Director-General of Education. It says "I intend to advise that the film does not meet standards of the normal school system for viewing at matinee sessions during school hours. Schools will be advised of this recommendation." Maybe the Department of Education does not want to be what it is.

Generally, people are not aware of the scale of the structural communist system, let alone their complicity and participation in them, even when they are not the perpetrators. As Julie Chronic puts it, "People who love animals want fur, wear makeup, use products and eat food that is the direct result of the systematic forms of cruelty to animals."

The main achievement of *The Animals Film* is to show clearly that all this degradation, exploitation and torture inflicted on animals is not just random or personal, but part of organized society, involving different sources of power, capitalism (especially the multinational drug companies),

government departments, scientists, military authorities, factory farms and university research laboratories. It is an outstanding example of the power of cinema to transcend the invisibility and conscience of an audience.

The Animals Film Directed by Victor Schofield. Myron Alkon, Producer; Victor Schofield, Myron Alkon, Executive producers; Frances Fitzgerald, Supervising Producer; Victor Schofield, Director of Photography; Ernie Koenig, Editor; Victor Schofield, Music; Robert West, Sound Consultant; Victor Schofield, Myron Alkon, Executive Producers; Production Company: John Two International; Distribution: Sharnell Film; Screen 116 min; U.S. Release 1981.

Running on Empty Mark Spratt

Running on Empty begins and ends with a suicide. This is not, as the face of it, an understating or understated premise, but no book are staged spectacularly as suicides can crash, the audience is expected to feel as debilitated by the mood, flames and mutilated metal that the flesh and blood just created aren't worth a second thought.

Mike (Terry Serw), an average young factory worker with an interest in high-performance cars, loses on the fringe of a street-racing game provided over by his (Richard Murphy) Mike's disabled woman in the pharmaceutical model Julie (Deborah Conway) who, coincidentally, is Fox's girlfriend. Fox is top of the heap in the local racing scene, so seems to be in it

for the glory and power. He has just achieved even more pay increase in his two challenges did not win being in his stride and speed himself out by crashing off the road.

Mike meets Julie after a brief photographic session. They go for a drive but are quickly overhauled by Fox and his friends who start, violently, that Mike must get up some money and race if he expects to take Fox's girl away from him. They cut off Mike's trunk up at a trophy not to show they were losing.

Julie, perhaps coincidentally, later betrays Mike by telling Fox Mike's best time for the standing quarter mile race. Mike loses. He needs money to improve his car with turbo-charging and sports code expense, and Mike and his mechanic friend Tony (Vigilia Marwede) head into the country to raise money by racing. Julie sees this too.

After racing some points, the group encounters Rebel, a blind ex-racer from the 1960s, somewhat over-played as a saint by Mike. Julie, despite his handicap, manages to build cars and even drive them in the open country Mike who remains his gateway throughout the story, is astonished by the youth wanting their money back. They set fire to Mike's car and he escapes by driving up on an inner track, sliding off it into a lake. But Mike and Tony build a new vehicle with Rebel's help and means to take on Fox.

By some narrative oddity, Ransauer, one of Fox's crew, alerts a police surveillance team, then reports the track clear of traffic. It proves not clear for Mike who starts the top of his car off underneath an articulated truck and lands in hospital. Realizing



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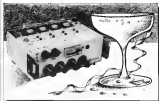
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Crosstalk is directed by Mark Espinoza, from a screenplay by Linda Lawe and Mark Espinoza, for producer Errol Sudnow. It stars Gary Day as Ed, Penny Downie, Kim Deacon, Bruce McInerney, Peter Collingwood and John Swart.



Above: Peter Collingwood and John Swart. Below: Collingwood. Gary Day as Ed Ballinger, and Penny Downie. Right: Kim Deacon



Production Survey

Continued from p. 463

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8:15 p.m. SATURDAY "The Seedling"
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4:30 p.m. SUNDAY PALESTINE
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8:30 p.m. SATURDAY
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8:15 p.m. Sunday
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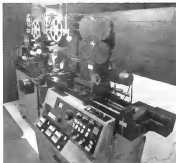
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What is a Documentary?

Continued from p. 415

The Analytic Approach

If Grierson's stance was essentially reformist, that of Russian director Dziga Vertov (1896-1954) was thoroughly revolutionary. Where Grierson produced documentaries with the aim of improving social conditions, Vertov's goal was to transform those institutions.

In the documentary, Vertov found a unique cultural tool that could be used to analyze both the emerging forms of post-revolutionary socialism and the cinema's potential as a form of expression. As a member of the revolutionary wing of Russian Futurism, Vertov believed that "art is not a mirror which reflects the historical struggle, but a weapon of that struggle."¹ New social conditions required new aesthetic values. As well as the social and political revolution, there had to be a revolution in art itself: pre-revolutionary aesthetics were inappropriate for post-revolutionary purposes. This meant declaring war on the dominant narrative cinema. In one of his first theoretical manifestos, Vertov asserted that "old films" were "romanticized and theatricalized" and potentially dangerous to the future of the cinema. His denunciation of "acted" films, however, was not the same as Grierson's. Grierson's objections stemmed from his belief that Hollywood cinema imitated rather than revealed the "real." For Vertov, whose commitment lay at working out the specific material conditions of cinema as a medium-producing system with its own sphere of expression and influence, the influence achieved by fiction films allowed them to dictate what was possible and acceptable. An attitude to this "terrible person of habit" had to be found.

Vertov began his work as an editor, first with short propaganda newsreels placed together out of material sent back from cameramen on Agrarian trains, and then with *Kino Pravda* or *True Film*, the weekly equivalent of the official Party newspaper. During this period he developed a new, non-actuarial style of editing designed to an extent even as a revolutionary perspective. This break with what were seen as the bourgeois tendencies of "old cinema" was consolidated by his theory of the *Kino-Glas*, or Film Eye: for Vertov, cinema was characterized by its capacity to capture the dynamics of movement and "to render the ordinarily invisible visible to all." While Flaherty's documentaries were based on the observational power of the single camera — a perceived epideic akin to that of human vision — Vertov saw in the cinema the possibility of a radical restructuring of perception. The film Eye would offer completely original ways of seeing, unobscured by "human inaccessibility" and "the limits of single space."²

Some realism, tracking shots, unexpected angles and cuts, shooting with hidden cameras, projecting backwards, automated stills, high-speed film used for night shooting — these were the aesthetic and technical hallmarks of such Vertov documentaries as *Salute, Soviet* (1925), *A Sixth of the World* (1926) and *The Komsomol* (1928). But it was in *The Man With a Movie Camera* (1929) that Vertov directly expressed his Film Eye theory. This very complex film presents a kaleidoscope of urban daily life at the same time as laying bare the system by which these cinematic images are produced, reproduced and consumed. We see both the making of a documentary and the documentary that is being made, so that where the Flaherty/

Dziga Vertov's *The Man with the Movie Camera*

subject could the documentary arrive at "truth", defined in essential rather than absolute terms as "the man's truth". As the French photographer-documentarist, Jean Rouch, argued, the filmmaker had to say to the audience: "I looked at what happened with my subjective eye, and this is what I believe took place."³

This vision of intimacy required new technology, since the cumbersome paraphernalia of the earlier documentary — tripod, heavy lights and camera, cables, large crews — dragged the action and made obstructive filming impossible. When the *Idemata* format already in use as newsreels was adopted, reduced costs and lighter, more manipulable cameras compensated for the loss of picture quality, and the development of more reliable film stock expended the options for location shooting. Equally important was the creation of more flexible, portable sound recording equipment; as post-synchronous sound dubbing of dialogue or commentary was now seen as compromised. The "feeling of being there" could only be conveyed if the filmmaker could, as Lenzack said, "walk in and out of buildings, up and down stairs, film in stair-calls all over the place, and get synchronous sound!"

What is a Documentary?

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Peter Lask

Executive producer, *The Fabulous Cinema*
and *The American*
1982

Grierson's approach to realism effaced the process by which meaning is produced. Vertov systematically foregrounds this process. *The Man With a Movie Camera* questions the assumption that the documentary is a window on the world by drawing attention to the fact that what is on the screen is merely an image: the true reality is not the content of what is shown but the image itself. This conscious subversion of the documentary makes the focus of the film not the real world but the cinematic language used to inscribe that world.

The Intimate Approach

During the 1930s, a new critique of documentary was advanced by filmmakers who believed that the unobscured and intrusive machinery of Mann production precluded a genuine documentary realism. As journalist-producer Robert Drew of Drew Associates, the famous American documentary production company, commented: "As a spectator, I don't believe there I can see people directing them. I can see light flashes. I can see people looking for ones. They aren't real. There's something pupped like about them."⁴

The solution, according to the American documentary filmmaker Richard Lenzack, was to abandon the "controlled filming" of directors such as Flaherty in favor of techniques which would allow the filmmaker "to get as close as possible" to the spontaneous subject. For Lenzack, the goal of documentary was to discover and reveal "moments of truth" about the "real" world, and the central problem was "how to convey the feeling of being there."⁵ Only through intimacy with the

Two loosely-articulated schools emerged around these ideas. American Direct Cinema and French Cinema-Flamé. Direct cinema, associated with such filmmakers as Richard Lenzack, Al and David Noyes, D. A. Pennebaker, Frederick Wiseman and producer Robert Drew, was non-interventionist and observational, emphasizing proximity to events and "being in the right place at the right time". Cinema vérité, principally identified with Jean Rouch and Chris Marker, was premised on a commitment to participation and direct intervention. For those being a seemingly invisible overpresence, the camera became "a kind of psychomotoric armature" which let people "do things they wouldn't do otherwise."⁶

Direct cinema and cinema vérité had in common an interest in crisis and the belief that essential truths were revealed in moments of tension and pressure. While direct cinema entered situations of tension, however, and aimed for crises to develop, cinema vérité actively provoked crises. According to Rouch, once a crisis was set in motion, what was constructed as a really artificial, because already "real" and a source of "staggering revelation."⁷

For Flaherty, Grierson and Vertov, the documentary was a way of exploring and commenting on public culture on the social, the racialized, the typical, the extraordinary, even the language of documentary itself. In contrast, direct cinema and cinema vérité deliberately turned away from the public domain towards the realm of the private and the intimate, where truth was equated with personal confession.

Continued on p. 419

14. *in Lenzack, op. cit.*, p. 12315. *ibid.*, p. 13716. *ibid.*, p. 12812. *in MacLean, ibid.*, p. 23613. *ibid.*, p. 261

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